

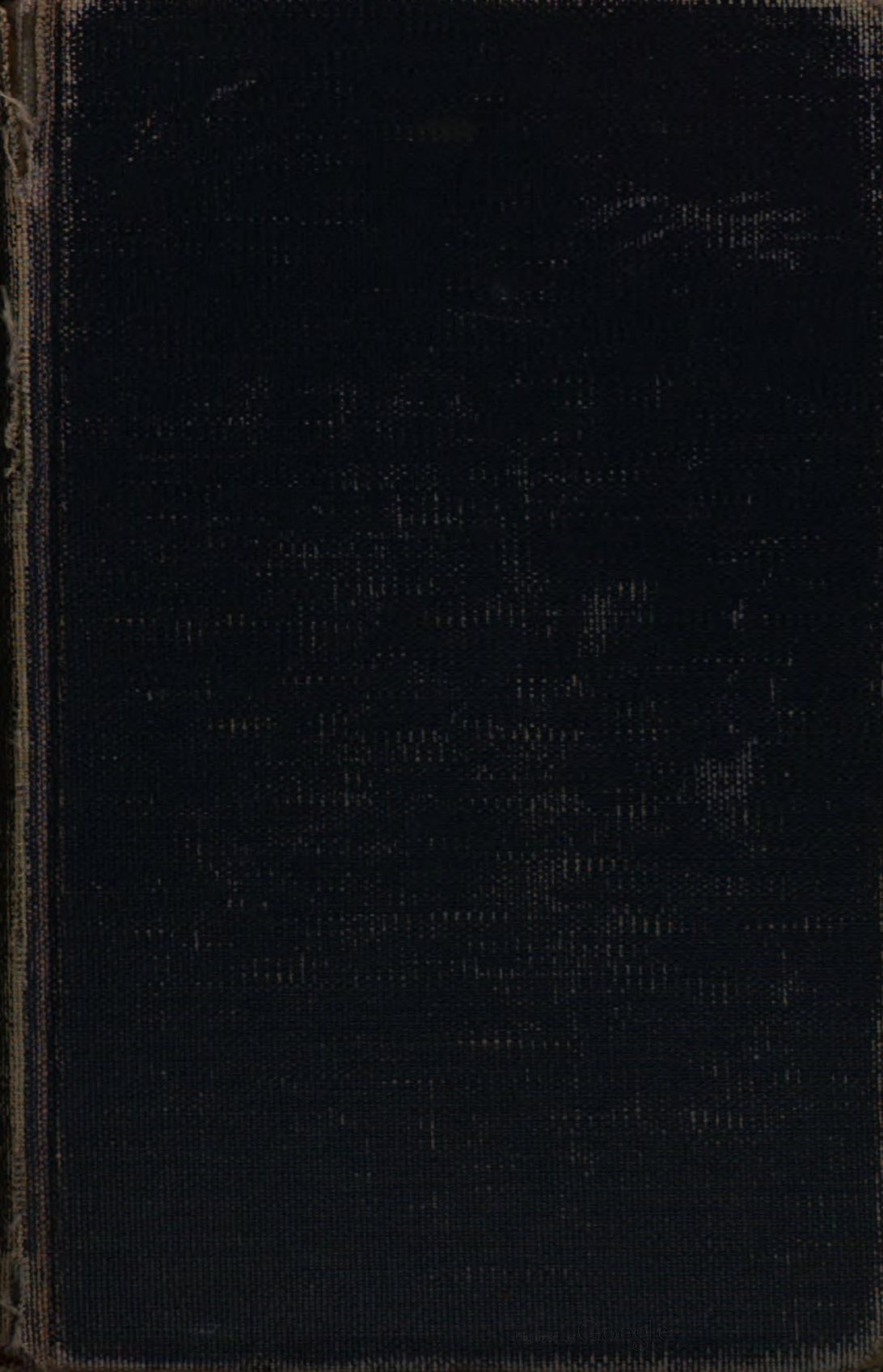
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# CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS



# CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

*General*  
BY  
G. WILLOUGHBY-MEADE

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY  
MEMBER OF COUNCIL, CHINA SOCIETY

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**TO MY FRIEND  
LIONEL GILES  
IN GRATITUDE**





## PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to interest the general reader in some of the folk-tales,—particularly those of the ‘uncanny’ type,—in which China is so rich ; and to outline, as briefly and clearly as possible, the beliefs which appear to underlie them.

No claim to scientific treatment is made, nor has a sharp line been drawn between folk-lore and mythology. Where the term ‘superstition’ occurs, it is used for convenience, rather than in any unsympathetic spirit.

For the material itself, I am indebted to the labour of others. Numerous Chinese texts have been drawn upon, especially for the paraphrases of the ghost and demon tales presented ; and, as a rule, where my own version does not tally with the translations consulted, I have either kept to the general sense, or made small alterations in the hope of rendering the meaning clearer to those unacquainted with Chinese modes of thought.

The fullest and most grateful acknowledgments are due to the Successors of the late E. J. Brill, Limited, of Leyden, Holland, for their kindness and courtesy in allowing me wide powers of borrowing the material brought together by the late Dr. J. J. M. de Groot in his standard work on *The Religious System of China* ; and to the Rev. Père Léon Wieger, S.J., for permission to make similar use of his works on *Taoism and Modern Chinese Folk-lore*. I owe to the kindness of Messrs. Luzac & Co. all my data concerning the Chinese

## P R E F A C E

sceptic, Wang Ch'ung, in Dr. Forke's translation of the *Lam Hêng*. Mr. W. W. Skeat has personally offered me help, apart from that which I have derived from his *Malay Magic*; and his publishers, Messrs. Macmillan & Co., must be associated with him in this act of kindness.

Thanks are also due to Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., for the valuable matter contained in Mr. W. F. Kirby's translation of the *Kalevala* (Everyman Edition); to Messrs. Ernest Benn, Limited, for references to Messrs. N. & W. Pogány's *Hungarian Fairy Book*; to the Gresham Publishing Co., Ltd., for the use of Mr. C. Squire's *Celtic Myth and Legend* and Mr. D. A. Mackenzie's *Teutonic Myth and Legend*; to Messrs. T. Werner Laurie, Ltd., and Messrs. Kelly & Walsh, Ltd., for the stories quoted from Miss Juliet Bredon's *Peking*; to the Open Court Publishing Company of Chicago, for material taken from Dr. Paul Carus' books, *Chinese Thought* and *The T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien*; to *The Times* newspaper for an interesting report on the Giant Lizards of Malay; and to other writers, short quotations from whom are acknowledged as they occur.

The authorities of the British Museum have placed at my disposal the pictures and statues reproduced in the illustrations, through the kind efforts of Dr. Lionel Giles, Mr. Waley, Mr. Laurence Binyon, and the Staff of the Oriental Students' Library.

Personal help has been given me by my daughter, who has prepared a considerable part of the index; by my sister, Mrs. Gertrude Dunn, author of *Unholy Depths* and other psychic works; by my friends, Messrs. Kenneth Havers, Paul Kelly and Thomas Brown, and other kind and sympathetic people.

If anything in this book arouses or increases the reader's interest in Chinese popular beliefs, I cannot

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do better than refer him to the works mentioned above, as well as to the following :—

<i>The Four Books of Confucius.</i>	Trans. by Rev. Jas. Legge.
<i>The Shi King.</i>	Trans. by Rev. Jas. Legge.
<i>C Chuang Tzū.</i>	Prof. H. A. Giles.
<i>The Civilization of China.</i>	Prof. H. A. Giles.
<i>Cbu Hsi and His Masters.</i>	Rev. Prof. J. Percy Bruce.
<i>The Sayings of Lao Tzū.</i>	Dr. Lionel Giles.
<i>Chinese Readers' Manual.</i>	F. W. Mayers.
<i>Bouddhisme, Tome 2.</i>	Rev. Père Léon Wieger, S.J.
<i>Buddhist China.</i>	R. F. Johnston.
<i>Asvaghôśha's Awakening of Faith.</i>	Trans. by Rev. T. Richard.
<i>Chinese Art</i> (Victoria and Albert Museum Publications).	Dr. W. Bushell.
<i>Folk-lore as an Historical Science.</i>	Sir L. Gomme.
<i>A Chinese Mirror.</i>	Mrs. F. Ayscough.
<i>Legend in Japanese Art.</i>	H. L. Joly.
<i>Symbolism in Chinese Art.</i>	W. Perceval Yetts.
<i>The Flight of the Dragon.</i>	L. Binyon.
<i>China.</i>	Sir John Davis.
<i>Around and About My Peking Garden.</i>	Mrs. A. Little.
<i>Pencil Speakings from Peking.</i>	Mrs. Grantham.
<i>Early Buddhism.</i>	T. W. Rhys Davids.
<i>Buddhism</i> (Catholic Truth Society Leaflet).	L. de la Vallée Poussin.
<i>Blue Tiger.</i>	H. R. Caldwell.
<i>Silk</i> (Novel).	Samuel W. Mervyn.
<i>The Red Lantern</i> (Novel)	} Edith Wherry.
<i>The Wanderer on a Thousand Hills</i> (Novel).	
<i>Dracula</i> (Novel).	Bram Stoker.
<i>Grimm's Fairy Tales.</i>	

Professor H. A. Giles' *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* is a thoroughly reliable and most important book on modern Chinese ghost and goblin lore, and is heartily recommended. It has not been avail-

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able for the purpose of this compilation, and any paraphrases or quotations of the tales translated by Professor Giles that may appear in my book have been obtained elsewhere.

Mr. E. T. C. Werner's *Myths and Legends of China*, which he modestly describes as a popular work, approaches the subject from an entirely different point of view, and deals largely with 'legend' and 'mythology' in the strict sense of those terms. I do not presume to challenge comparison with Mr. Werner's scholarly treatise, which merits careful study.

In many instances, I have taken the liberty of putting forward conjectures of my own as to the origin or meaning of various 'superstitious' beliefs and practices. The underlying idea, in every case, is that all fallacies bear some relation to reality; to an actual experience more or less truthfully described, more or less misconstrued or misunderstood. The fairy tales of Europe and the European relics in various museums are gradually finding their true place in the story of human thought; and evidences of the wanderings of mankind—mostly from East to West—are being checked and verified from the unearthing of ornaments and weapons, as well as of folk-tales. A fundamental unity of conception and similarity of outlook, from China to Ireland—if not quite to Peru—seem to be borne out, so far, by results.

It may be noticed, also, that I have not laid stress upon the unamiable side of Chinese life and thought. The failings of the Chinese people have been made known, only too thoroughly, by abler pens than mine; and I trust that this compilation may be found acceptable and sympathetic by the ordinary reader of novels and newspapers who is interested in human nature because it is human.

The truth about the Chinese people is mostly to

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be found in books written by scholars for the use of students. My aim is to interest and amuse those who have not studied the religion, art, or literature of the Chinese, but who may, perhaps, be encouraged to become better acquainted with the outlook of an industrious, gifted, and long-suffering people.

In the transliteration of Chinese words no hard-and-fast rule has been followed. Many of the names are well known in their accepted popular spelling, others are the names of obscure individuals whose adventures form the major part of the book, but whose identity is not a matter of any moment.

G. W. M.

LONDON, 1926.



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# I

## WHAT IS THE CHINESE IDEA OF THE 'SOUL'?

SOME sort of reply to this question is necessary before we begin to grope in the uncanny byways of Chinese thought.

General statements are mostly unsafe. General statements about the Chinese are very numerous, and nearly all wrong.

The Chinese number close on one-fourth of the human family; they are an agglomeration of several groups of races, precisely how many is not certain; their climates range from that of Bengal to that of Siberia; they differ immensely among themselves in speech, in physique, and in temperament. Their folklore is, therefore, very rich; their religious beliefs vary widely. The Chinese idea of the soul, then, will not be easy to define.

Setting apart, to begin with, the Christians and the Mohammedans—a very respectable minority of more than a dozen millions—the commonest view among the Chinese is that man has two souls: the Hun, or superior soul, which has much in common with the Shên, or good spirits, and is often designated by the latter name; and the P'o, or inferior soul, which is greatly feared for its powers of mischief, and partakes of the nature of the Kuei, or evil spirits.

A third 'soul' is vaguely believed, in some districts, to dwell in the mortuary tablet set up in memory of the deceased, and is the source of sundry weird tales.

C.G.G.

(1)

A

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As Buddhism has for centuries coloured, and been coloured by the older home-grown beliefs, certain philosophers have had a good deal to say about what a European monist would call 'the Universal Soul.' Individual souls have been held to be emanations, or even portions of it; while the more Buddhistic writers have gone so far as to deny any real existence to the individual soul, reducing it to a mere group of sensations, impressions, and memories. But of this more anon. [The man in the street, a staunch ancestor-worshipper, has no doubts whatever about the existence and survival after death of souls of some sort; to him they are definite and often amazingly prosaic entities. The theories of the 'high-brows' trouble him not at all.]

To be quite accurate, however, we must bear in mind that the written word is revered in China as in no other country; a link does exist between the classical and philosophical authors and the story-teller and soothsayer of the street corner. This link takes the form of ghost and bogie books, classed by the educated as 'hsiao shuoh,' or 'minor works,' along with novels and fiction generally; and a vast number of such books exist,—the work of writers of every style and grade.

At the risk of being somewhat dry, we must return for a few moments to the 'universal soul' theory, one form or another of which is taken for granted in these books.

The term Ch'i, meaning 'spirit,' 'breath,' 'vital force or fluid,' 'inherent nature,' 'disposition,' is much used by a school of thinkers who do not, as we should, contrast spirit and body, or mind and matter, but who divide the 'ethical' from the 'material,'—*i.e.*, that which is subject to the principle of law, from that which is soulless, automatic, or merely inanimate. One could almost say of the extremists of this school, that, to them, God is Law.

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The term Tao, meaning 'principle,' the 'right way,' the 'ultimate reason,' almost the 'logos' in the sense used in the Greek Testament, is understood by another school in the widest possible sense. They regard all life as *one*, because Tao is in and of everything, and therefore, of itself, makes, transforms, and unmakes everything. To this school nothing is impossible, or even improbable.

Though both schools tend to that monism to which so many Asiatic writers are prone, they have in common a preoccupation with ethics which is distinctively Chinese. Though everything is one, and anything may turn into anything else, good is good, and evil is evil: philosophy is all very well, but conduct (especially towards others) is what matters.

Even fate, even the inevitable accidents of environment, can be made—with the help of a Buddhistic theory imported from India—to depend upon conduct: that is to say, upon the good and bad actions of this life, and upon good and bad Karma, meaning thereby the stored-up and ever-active results and consequences of one's own and other people's past incarnations.

(The popular Chinese conception of the other world is that it is run very largely on the same lines as life on earth.) There are rewards and punishments, promotions and degradations, spells of happiness in rather earthly paradises, and sentences of expiation in very gruesome purgatories; re-births to pain and poverty, and to riches and honours. But none of these states are fixed and unchangeable; nothing is eternal but impermanence. It will be seen, then, that the Ch'i theory, the Tao theory, and the Buddhist theory all enter into the popular conception of man's soul and its history, and are more or less compatible with one another.)

Further, whichever idea of God, the First Cause, or the Universal Soul is held by any individual, there is

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a widespread belief that the operations of Creation manifest themselves as the working of the two great principles, the Yang and the Yin.

Yang, the positive principle, is associated with all that is bright, beneficent, active, masculine: symbolised by Heaven and the Sun. Yin, the negative principle, with darkness, passivity, the feminine in nature: symbolised by the Earth and Water.

The Yang is said to transform, the Yin to unite. By these processes they brought into being the five essences, water, fire, wood, metal and earth.

The interaction of Yang and Yin, in due season and right proportion, produce, and continue for ever the normal phenomena of nature; sunshine and rain, growth and decay, life and death. Man, especially his mental part, is built up of the finer portions of the five essences; but mind and matter have a common origin, in the operations of the First Principle through the Yang and the Yin.

In no sphere of Chinese life and thought can the Yang and the Yin be lost sight of: they are as important as the plus and minus signs in Algebra. Their nearest Western parallel is what we call 'the mysterious causes underlying the operations of Providence.'

How, then, are we to reconcile the notion that fate is the product of human conduct, and at the same time the outcome of operations caused or conducted by the Yang and the Yin, on a scale and in a manner utterly beyond human ken?

In the *Li Chi*, a very ancient classical work, Confucius is quoted as laying down the precise relation of Ch'i to the higher, or Shên soul, and the lower, or Kuei soul. [The higher soul functions fully through the Ch'i or 'living breath' of man; after his death, it departs to the source of light, the heavenly or Yang source of its being. The grosser, darker Kuei soul, of Yin origin, returns to the earth.]

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That one of the souls dwells in the grave until the decay of the body is a common belief in China and elsewhere. [Some indications point to an idea that it is the higher soul which adheres to the body, affording thereby a motive for expensive funerals and high honour to the dead; in other cases, where the lower soul is thought to lurk in the grave, we hear of its provoking the corpse to enter upon a weird phase of malevolent activity. Such a corpse may refresh itself with the flesh of other corpses and the blood of the living, and become a dangerous vampire.] We shall, however, have some more to say on this point later on.

The five 'elements' mentioned above not only combine to form the complete man, but are in some cases believed to provide him with subsidiary 'souls' in command of the five chief organs of the body, namely, the spleen, the lungs, the heart (the chief of all), the liver and the kidneys. These may perhaps be compared with the ganglia of Western physiology—the subsidiary nerve-centres in automatic control of those organs which work irrespective of consciousness.

To a logical mind, this jumble of personalities would be most unsatisfactory, even appalling. But, fortunately for himself, the Chinese is rarely logical; he is very human. [His home and his family, the approval of his ancestral spirits and the goodwill of his fellow-clansmen, the wholesome maxims of Confucius and the immemorial unwritten laws of his tribe and his guild, are more to him than the philosophers' disquisitions about Ch'i and Tao, fate and Karma. Nevertheless, he is saturated through and through with beliefs in a nightmare world of spirits and monsters, and his mind is a storehouse of goblin fancies, fostered and sanctioned by these very theories of transformation and impermanence.]

The above remarks are too brief and general for any

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purpose but one; that is, to prepare oneself for legends and tales in which the human soul plays many parts, mostly uncanny. Souls can be exchanged, disguised, sub-divided; can multiply their appearance, haunt the wicked, guide and warn the good; can inform animals, trees, or inanimate objects: all this and more being granted, we can begin to read, and to wonder at the vast and intricate popular mythology of China.

In one of the weird tales collected by P'u Sung Ling, for example, we are told of a very holy Buddhist priest of Ch'ang Ch'ing, who died suddenly at the age of eighty. Unconscious of death, the priest's soul flew a great distance and chanced to pass by as a rich young layman fell from his horse and was killed. His soul entered the body of the young man, who gradually recovered his senses. As the servants crowded round, he said, 'How did I get here? I am a Buddhist priest.' Thinking he was merely delirious, the servants escorted home their master's body (containing the old priest's soul); but he refused wine and meat, avoided the society of his wife and her handmaids, and very soon determined to set out for Ch'ang Ch'ing, as he was anxious about the welfare of the community in his absence. He told the servants to look after his 'home' affairs. When he reached the monastery, he asked the monks what had happened to the old priest. They showed him a new grave, in which the body had been buried. He gave the monks some advice and went back to the rich young man's house; but in spite of his 'wife's' entreaties, and after several attempts to live as a layman, he returned to the monastery, and told the monks so many details of his priestly career, that they eventually accepted him as having the old priest's soul in the youthful body of the dead layman. Some time later, some old friends visited him at the monastery, and found that, although

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he had been over eighty years a priest, he did not look more than thirty years of age.

A story from another source deals with a boatman who, passing under a bridge, accidentally struck, with his gaff, a jar containing some human remains, which fell into the water. On returning home, he found that his younger sister was possessed by a strange spirit. 'I am the fortune-teller, Su,' she cried, 'of Hu Chou Fu. During my life I was respected by all, from the Viceroy of the Province downwards. And now a common boatman has thrown my bones into the water!' Though quite illiterate before, she suddenly showed signs of considerable education and made her mark as a fortune-teller. Her brother, the boatman, however, was much upset, and offered a petition in the Temple of the Guardian Spirit of the town. That night the sister had a weird dream. She told her brother next morning that two officials of the other world had taken her to the local Temple, where the late Su's ghost had laid a complaint about the insult to his bones. But the Guardian of the Town had rated him severely for plaguing an innocent girl, and sneered at him for a poor sort of fortune-teller, a fellow who could not foresee the risk of his remains being dishonoured, and arrange for a more becoming burial! So the ghost of the poor impostor was dismissed with a flogging (we are not told how it was done), and the girl set free of the obsession. From that time she was once more quite unlettered, and utterly ignorant of divination.

‘Once upon a time,’ said the philosopher, Chuang Tzū, ‘I dreamt I was a butterfly. I was conscious only of my fancies as a butterfly, and unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly I awoke, and was myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming that I am a man.’



The Greek metaphor of the human soul as a butterfly is curiously reflected in this tale, especially as there is little doubt that they were unconnected.

A thirteenth century text relates how some young men, noticing that a fellow student was sleeping very deeply in an out-of-the-way part of the college buildings, spread out around his bed candles, flowers, incense sticks and paper money, as at a funeral. When he woke up and saw these preparations he imagined that he must be dead, and with a deep sigh lay down and went to sleep again. After a while, the practical jokers came and examined him and found that he was really dead. So they removed the funeral furnishings and vowed each other to secrecy. The writer explains the occurrence by saying that evidently the superior soul of the sleeper, while out of his body, noticed the preparations for the funeral and did not re-enter the body. (Ch'iang Hsing Tsa Luh.)

The following tales, of various dates, illustrate the belief that the superior soul is often but lightly attached to the body. We shall see how easily it may leave its prison of flesh, either in a dream, during its transitory 'possession' of another body, or by transmigration at 'death.'

A certain young man from the South-west of China, where magic is popularly supposed to be much cultivated, was an utterly daring and unscrupulous ruffian. Several times he was caught red-handed in crime; several times he was beaten to death, decapitated, or flung into a river and drowned. Each time, within three days, he was about again, and as wicked as ever. At last, after decapitation, his head and his body were thrown away, each in a different place and far apart. Again he reappeared, none the worse for his experiences save for a thin red line round his neck. His behaviour was so bad this time that he actually thrashed his mother. So she went to a mandarin, and handed

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him a vase, explaining that the superior soul of her wicked son was in it, while the inferior soul animated his body. 'He has now gone too far,' she said. 'Break this vase, dissipate his superior soul, and execute his body.' This was done, and in a few days the body began to decompose normally, and the villain committed no more crimes. (Tzū Puh Yü.)

\* \* \* \* \*

In the year 1756, a married woman named Li died at the age of thirty. Her husband went into the town of Ling-pi (An Hwei), where their home was, to buy her a coffin. On his return he was overjoyed to find that she was alive. But when he went near her, she cried, 'You must not approach me. I am Miss Wang, of such-and-such a village, and I am unmarried. How did I get here?' The husband was frightened and communicated with the Wang family. They had just buried an unmarried daughter, and came post haste to Li's house; so the resuscitated wife of Li wept and embraced them, and said so many things about the past life of their daughter that they could no longer doubt that Miss Wang's superior soul was reincarnated in Mrs. Li's body. Presently Miss Wang's affianced spouse came, and the apparent Mrs. Li blushed and showed that she knew who he was. The case was brought before the sub-Prefect, Wang Yen-T'ing, who decided that the lady in dispute must be held to be Mrs. Li.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

One evening a magistrate named Su took his seat in court as usual. On doing so he noticed a woman kneeling at the chief door in the attitude of a petitioner, her face covered with a black veil.

<sup>1</sup>The surnames Chang, Wang, and Li are the Smith, Jones and Robinson of China. They occur in many of these tales, no doubt to conceal the identity (and 'save the face') of the families of whom the reports were first spread.

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It occurred to him that the mysterious lady might be a soul come to demand justice of him. So he sent an usher, and bade him call out at the door of the court-house that any soul in pain should come in and make its complaint, and he would hear it. Invisible to all but the magistrate, the woman entered and knelt before the tribunal; but her voice was just audible to the officers of the court, like that of a small child. 'My name is T'ien,' she said. 'My husband is dead, and I am resolved to remain a widow.' (A point of honour in China.) 'But my eldest brother-in-law made my life a burden with his attentions, and I was so unhappy that I hanged myself.'

The magistrate sent for the man, who denied everything, but suddenly he saw the soul of his dead sister-in-law and confessed. The brother-in-law was punished, but the people highly approved of the justice of the magistrate, and erected a monument in honour of the constancy of the widow whose superior soul had so clearly vindicated her virtue.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ch'ien-pu, son of a military official called Fan Wên-chêng, was an unusually intelligent child. He could always foresee his father's instructions, and during a war on a distant frontier, Ch'ien-pu could send his superior soul at will to the army headquarters of the enemy, and keep his father posted with the latest plans of their general staff. One day, however, the child's soul received a severe fright while it was out of his body, whereupon Ch'ien-pu lost his gift of sending forth the soul, and died quite young.

\* \* \* \* \*

A certain Buddhist priest used to be locked up in his cell in a trance, for a fortnight or even a month on end, from time to time, during which his superior soul was at liberty.

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On one of these occasions, a Government official demanded a night's lodging at the monastery, but there was no room for him. So he had the closed cell burst open, and commanded the 'corpse' to be taken out and burnt. The monks, afraid to disobey, did so. Presently the soul came crying round the monastery at night, 'Where shall I rest?' At length, on a certain night, all the monks opened their windows and cried, 'Here, come to me!' After that the soul entered the body of each monk for a night at a time, in turn, and it was noticed that so long as each monk was animated by the 'homeless' soul as well as his own, his normal intelligence was doubled. (Lung Hsing Tzū Chi.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Early in the eighth century, A.D., the Prefect of Liang-Chou died suddenly while on circuit. His superior soul left the chamber of death, turned the key, forbade the room to be opened, and returned to the chief city of his district with his retinue. For forty days the soul was occupied winding up the duties of the Prefecture, and then sent for its body. When it was brought, the soul supervised the funeral arrangements, took leave of the family, entered the body, and disappeared.

\* \* \* \* \*

The very plausible theory that a man's soul dwells in the brain has given rise to some queer stories.

A work of the fourth century, A.D., the *Sou Shên Chi*, relates that, somewhere in the South, there lived people whose heads were able to free themselves from their bodies. General Chu Huan (A.D. 177-238) had a female slave from that country, whose head flew about regularly every night during her sleep. The head used its ears as wings, and would escape through a skylight or any small hole in the wall. It came

back at dawn. One night a member of the General's household saw the headless trunk, and felt it. The body was rather cold and the respiration slow and weak. A blanket was drawn over it. When the head returned, it failed to see the wrapped-up body; twice or thrice it fell to the ground, making a whining sound, while the trunk panted as if its breath were failing. When the blanket was moved and revealed the trunk, the head rose and rejoined the body. The girl awoke quite healthy, but she was sent away. On further enquiries it transpired that several officials had met with such beings in the South; and if a copper vessel were placed over the body, so that the head could not rejoin it, the creature died.

The blood, although controlled by the heart as the centre of all mental and other functions in the Chinese view, is also supposed to contain a very important 'Soul,' if not the actual Shên or Hun, the superior spiritual personality.

'In places where fights are fought and people are slain,' says a compendium of ghost-stories (the *Poh Wu Chi*), 'the blood of men and horses changes in time into will-o'-the-wisps. As a rule they are invisible, but sometimes a wayfarer comes in contact with them; they cling to him and become luminous. . . . If he stands still for some time they disappear, but in that case he loses his Hun (becomes silly and unconscious) and does not recover until the next day.'

A twelfth century philosopher, Chang Ch'ih, relates that he was once spending the night in a lonely little Buddhist monastery. At dead of night he heard a chirruping, as of a myriad chickens, and looking round, he saw the ground studded with little lights. The monks told him it was an old battlefield, and that the manifestation occurred whenever the weather was dark.

The 'double,' or superior soul acting as a separate person apart from the body, appears in some stories of the fourth and fifth centuries, A.D.

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A man, whose name is not recorded, came out of his bedroom as usual one morning, accompanied by his wife. She returned very shortly to the room, and was greatly surprised to see that her husband had gone back to bed, and still more when a servant entered and told her that her husband had sent for a mirror. The woman pointed to the bed, and would not believe the servant when she said, 'But I have just come from him.' So the husband was sent for, and was more amazed than either the wife or the servant.

Seeing the likeness to himself, the man knew it must be his own soul. They were all afraid to shake or frighten it, so they gently stroked and tapped the bed, and the image gradually grew fainter, and, as it were, sank into the mat upon which it had been lying. Very shortly the husband became ill, and never quite regained the use of his mental faculties.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the eighth century, a stranger came to consult Liu Shao-Yu, the best-known diviner in the capital city of his day. The stranger brought him a length of silk as a fee for his professional services, and asked if he could be told how many years he had yet to live. Liu made a magic diagram and said to the stranger, 'The signs are not auspicious; the evening of this very day may be fatal.' The visitor then began to sigh and groan, and asked for some gruel. A member of Liu's household went to fetch some water, and on returning, noticed that there were two Lius in the room. Liu pointed at the stranger and said to the servant, 'Give the water to him,' whereupon the stranger took his leave, the servant showing him out. Presently the servant and others in the house saw this second Liu vanish, with piteous wailing, into thin air. So the servant said to Liu, 'Do you know that visitor, Sir? He spoke to me of all your past affairs.' Liu then understood that the visitor was

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his own soul, and when he and the servant looked at the roll of silk, they found it was really paper. Liu sighed, and said 'My soul has left me; I must die.' And he expired that evening. (Articles of various kinds made of paper are burnt at funerals for the use of the deceased in the other world.)

\* \* \* \* \*

In another tale of the same period, a certain Ching Shêng, on his way to the capital on official business, had to stop at an inn in a suburb of the city. Soon after he mentioned his clan-name to the innkeeper, an elderly woman came out of a hall of the house and sat down to chat with him. Eventually they got on family affairs, and it transpired that the old lady was looking after a grand-daughter, called Miss Liu, daughter of the Prefect of the district of Hwai-Yin, and was doing her best to arrange a good marriage for the girl. Ching was eventually united, with much festivity, to Miss Liu, and after a honeymoon at the old lady's house, he took his wife to Hwai-Yin to call on her parents.

The Prefect's wife was surprised, and suspected that the girl must be the child of some other marriage of her husband's, so she made a point of seeing Ching's wife at the earliest opportunity and—the girl's appearance was identical with that of her own daughter! When the bride heard this she smiled, walked up to the daughter of the house, and the two girls immediately became one. The Prefect began to investigate, and found out that his mother-in-law, who had been dead some time, had given her grand-daughter's soul in marriage. Search was made for the house where the match was made, but no trace of it was ever found.

\* \* \* \* \*

An elderly official wished to have a wife for his son, and knowing that a neighbour called Lu had three

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charming daughters, he sent for a certain Ma, a well-known magician. 'Ma,' said he, 'I have only one son, and I want a good wife for him; one of the Lu girls, if possible. Can you conjure them here, that the boy's mother may have a good look at them?' Ma erected an altar in the Buddhist 'chapel' of the establishment, performed his incantations, and presently the souls of the three girls appeared. The diviner chose the second, saying she was fated to be a Governor's wife, and in due course the marriage was arranged.

The son became a high official, but was killed in action during a civil war. The family thought Ma had made a false prophecy, but when order was restored the son received (after death) the honorary Governorship of his wife's father's district. Posthumous titles of this kind are not uncommon in China.

\* \* \* \* \*

A certain Buddhist monk who was well versed in Dhyâna, or meditation, used to send the souls of his disciples into the blessed regions described in the Sûtra (sacred text) of Amitâbha, the Lord of Light. Sitting with a pupil in a quiet cell, says the old narrative, the monk would seize the pupil's soul, and stroll with it through the regions of rest. When the soul had thus been escorted two or three times, the visions in the owner's dreams began to tally with his adventures in the blessed land, and at his death his soul, of course, went there and nowhere else. It entered the Paradise of the West. (Lang Hsüan Chi.)

(A few notes on this type of Buddhism are given in another place.)

The souls of suicides and others who have died while under the influence of violent passion are held to be malevolent, especially if, as is usually the case, their bodies have not received proper burial. They tempt the living to suicide; if they succeed, the



newly-made suicides pass into a state of torment, and the souls of the tempters are reincarnated.

A few illustrations of this unpleasant doctrine are annexed.

There once lived, in the village of Hsieh Chia Tien, a literate named Chou Jao Hu. For forty years he worked there as a poor schoolmaster.

One evening, after supper, he was seated reading in the schoolroom, when a former pupil of his named Fêng came in, saluted him, and said, 'Please come to my home, we are in great trouble.' He said this very sadly, took his leave, and went away.

Chou was very frightened, for Fêng had died a few days before, and Chou realised that something serious must be afoot for Fêng's soul to summon him in this manner. So the poor old schoolmaster plucked up his courage and repaired to the home of Mêng Lan, father of his late pupil. Mêng, who was taking the air outside his house, invited Chou to come in, and they drank and chatted together for some time. Chou made no remark as to the cause of his visit, and rose to go about midnight. Mêng Lan invited him to stay the night, and gave him the middle room of a set of three on the first floor, at the head of the stairs. One of the side rooms was occupied by Fêng's widow, and stifled sobbing could be heard in her apartment. Chou did not put out his light or go to bed; and it was not long before the head of a woman appeared at the top of the stairs. When she saw Chou, she drew back: then she began to come up again. She seemed to be trying to get into the young widow's bedroom. Chou did not like the look of things, and called out 'Who's there?' 'Sir,' replied the woman, 'at this time of night you ought to be asleep.' 'What business is it of yours?' said Chou, rather angrily. Then the woman, dishevelled, bleeding and with a suicide's halter in her hand, made a rush at Chou. He dodged

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her, and suddenly felt someone holding him at the back. 'Courage, I am here!' cried Fêng, who had come to his assistance. Chou called loudly for help, and Mêng Lan rushed up; so Chou told him what had happened. The two men then went into the widow's room, and found that she had hanged herself, in consequence of a rebuke addressed to her by her father-in-law, but was still living. The soul of a suicide, on the watch for someone to take its place, had been watching for a chance to reach her, and tempt her to do away with herself. The soul of her late husband, aware of the danger, had summoned his old schoolmaster, in the nick of time, to save her.

The schoolmaster was no doubt chosen because, as a student of the sacred classics of Confucius, he would be credited in popular belief with the power to avert evil and to command erring spirits. This idea will be found to enter into a large number of Chinese ghost-tales.

\* \* \* \* \*

A certain Ch'êng had an adventure at Hang Chou, where he was acting as one of the superintendents of the numerous candidates gathered together for the examinations.

One morning he rose, dressed, went out for a while, and presently returned. He locked himself into his room, and had a long talk with somebody whom no one had seen; then he went out again, and did not come back. His people were beginning to get uneasy, when a travelling cooper brought him in. His clothes were wet, and his head was covered with mud. He looked very haggard, and could not speak.

He was treated with a decoction of ginger and rubbed over with cinnabar (?), whereupon he came to himself and told his tale. 'This morning, while out for a walk, I met a man dressed in black, who saluted me and said, 'Let us go back and fetch your things, and

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I will take you to the fairies.' I returned, packed, locked my room and went with him. He took me out of the Ch'in Mên,' (a gate of the city), 'to the Hsi Hu (Western Lake), and from the shore we saw, far out on the waters, azure palaces, and beautiful maidens singing and dancing. He suggested that we should join them, and when I asked him how, he said, 'Jump into the water!' As I was on the point of doing this, a voice called out to me, 'Beware! A wicked devil is tempting you! Do nothing of the kind!' I looked around, and there was my late father. The man in black attacked him and drove him away, and that's all I can remember. I felt cold, then came a warmish wind, and the man in black vanished.'

Here the cooper took up the narrative.

'Passing the lake this morning, I saw an umbrella lying on the shore. I stooped to pick it up, and heard a noise in the water. A man was diving in, head downwards, as if trying to reach the bottom. I had a dreadful job getting him out, and he turned out to be this gentleman, so I brought him here.'

The family thanked the cooper and rewarded him, and then Ch'êng's wife said: 'The living and the dead are the same people. Why do the dead try to kill the living, while the living leave the dead in peace?' A mocking voice, coming from an invisible being, answered her:—'Is it not written in the classics that the good seek to make others good, and the wise seek to make others wise? So we, the drowned, seek to drown others; the hanged seek to strangle others.' (Meaning that the evil souls of suicides tempt the living to suicide.) A burst of mocking laughter rang out, and then all was silent.

This ugly story illustrates the belief that, where a parent is worshipped with the customary rites (as no doubt the father of Ch'êng was), his soul, knowing the danger of his son, acted in a benevolent manner and

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warned him against the Kuei, the soul which had departed in an evil mood and had not been placated by a proper funeral.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Kuei which was allowed by Heaven to appear in order to have a criminal brought to justice, appears in the following narrative.

One night a Mr. Ku asked for a lodging in an old Buddhist temple in the western suburbs of Ch'ang Chou. 'All right,' said the priest, 'if you care to stay. I am going with my disciples to hold a service for a dead man who is being put in his coffin to-night.' Ku agreed, and as soon as the priest and his attendants had gone, he closed the door on the inside, blew out the lamp and lay down to sleep.

At midnight he heard someone knocking and calling loudly for the door to be opened. 'Who are you?' cried Ku. 'I am your friend, Shên Ting-Lan,' was the reply. Now Ku knew that his friend Shên had died ten years before, and was very frightened. 'Do not be afraid,' said the voice, 'I wish to tell you something. If I had intended to hurt you, I should have come in unbidden, being a spirit. I only knocked so as not to startle you by appearing suddenly.'

Ku opened the door; a man came a few steps into the room, then fell down flat on the floor. Ku was now thoroughly startled, and began groping for the lamp.

The man on the floor then confessed that he was not Shên Ting-Lan at all. He had merely said so to gain admittance. 'I am the man they are putting in the coffin to-night,' he said. 'My unfaithful wife poisoned me, and I look to you to avenge me.' 'I am not a magistrate,' said Ku. 'What can I do?' 'Ask for an inquest on my remains. That will prove what I say.' 'Where is your body?' 'Here,' said the other. 'Get a lamp now. When the light

shines on me I shall not be able to speak. But there's no more I need tell you.'

At that moment a knock was heard on the door, and the priest and his disciples returned. They were very much amazed at the events of the night, and told Ku that while they were reciting the appropriate prayers during the removal of the body to the coffin, the corpse had vanished. 'It came here,' said Ku. On examination they saw that it was lying flat on the floor, bleeding from the eyes, nose, etc. These indications are generally accepted in China as evidence of poison, and the next day the matter was reported to the district magistrate.

\* \* \* \* \*

Apparently Chinese ghosts sometimes find the time hang heavily on their hands, and do not lose that passion for play-going which is a marked feature of the race.

About the end of the eighteenth century, the Pao Ho Pan was the 'star' theatrical company in Peking.

One day a messenger on horseback called at the box-office of the Company, and said: 'You are wanted urgently to perform a comedy at a town house just outside a certain gate of the city.' The players were resting that day, so they put together their properties and started for the place. They were still travelling when night fell, and by and by, came to an open space in which they saw a house brightly lit up, and a crowd of people. On their arrival, a duenna came to meet them, and said: 'The young lady of the house wants you to perform romantic dramas only, and no Shên (good spirits) are to be impersonated; also, do not make too much noise.'

(A Chinese theatrical company of the old type is accustomed to performing from memory a large number of short plays, to order, without scenery, and with hardly any properties; an extensive, and

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often costly wardrobe, comprising costumes of different periods, enables them to do this. The audiences are mostly imaginative people who do not miss scenery or 'stage effects.')

The manager arranged a programme in accordance with his instructions, and the players acted and sang from midnight until dawn. There was no interval, and no refreshments were offered them. The audience puzzled them extremely; neither the ladies behind the bead curtains nor the men in the body of the house conversed, except in whispers, and they did not say a word that any of the performers could understand. The actors eventually got rather disappointed and angry so, in defiance of their instructions, they put Kuan Ti<sup>1</sup> on the boards. He had a great 'entrance,' swaggering on with brandished sword, to a crashing orchestral accompaniment.

Immediately the place went dark and the audience vanished. The players found themselves in a thicket before a tomb; so they packed up their outfit, and reached the town during the following day. When they told their neighbours about it, they learned that the tomb was that of a young lady of the great Mu family.

\* \* \* \* \*

I can hardly do better, in closing this chapter, than recount the story of the virtuous mandarin who, in the flesh, paid a visit to the other world in the interests of the people living in his administrative district.

In the picturesque mountain country of Sze Ch'uan, in the extreme West of China, is a little old city called Fêng Tu; and near by the city is a deep well, popularly believed to be a means of communication between this world and the next.

Some thirty million 'cash' were spent every year by the people on paper money and paper clothes, which

<sup>1</sup> Kuan Ti, a very popular minor divinity, an enemy of all uncanny doings. We shall hear more of him later.

they burned at the mouth of this well for the benefit of the dead. They used to call it paying the 'under-world tax'; and those who defaulted, they said, suffered from disease and other misfortunes.

About 1650, a new Sub-Prefect called Liu Kang was appointed; and when he heard of the custom, he forbade it. The people made a tumult, and said to him, 'When you have put things right for us with the people of the Underworld, we shall obey you.' 'Where can I find them?' asked Liu. 'At the bottom of the well.' 'Who will go down?' Nobody would undertake it, so Liu said, 'I am the person responsible for the people's welfare, I'll go down myself.' Protests were made, but Liu sent for ropes, had himself tied to them, and ordered the people to lower him into the well. His secretary, Li Hsien, then volunteered to accompany him, and he was let down also.

At first, the well got darker and darker, but lower down a new light appeared, and the two officials found themselves among towns and buildings exactly like those on the surface of the earth. The inhabitants' bodies, however, cast no shadows (a world-wide peculiarity of ghosts), and they could rise in the air at will. Presently an inferior official accosted Liu and said, 'You are a dignitary of the living world, what have you come here for?' 'I have come,' replied Liu, 'to have my people's underworld tax remitted.' 'He is a very good mandarin,' murmured the surrounding spectators. 'For that purpose,' said the official, 'you must apply to Judge Pao, who is at the moment in court.' Liu was then escorted into a large hall of justice, where a majestic old man in royal robes occupied the judge's seat. The ushers cried 'The Sub-Prefect of Fêng Tu!' The judge went to meet him, saluted him, and escorted him to a seat on the bench. Then he said: 'The upper and lower

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worlds are as far apart as Yang and Yin. What is your business here?' Liu rose to his feet and said: 'For many years the crops in my district have been bad; the people are ruined, the Government is severely handicapped; my people cannot pay their earthly taxes, how can they pay the 'underworld tax' as well? I have risked my life to intercede for them.' Judge Pao smiled and replied:—'The "underworld tax" is an invention of the Taoist and Buddhist priests. They rob the people, pretending it is to help the dead. And the dead are unable to explain that it does them no good! You are a wise mandarin to take to heart the welfare of your people, and your application is quite just.' At this moment a ray of bright light shone forth, and Pao said, 'Kuan Ti is coming. Will you and your secretary please retire for a little while?' They withdrew to an ante-chamber, and Kuan Ti descended majestically into the judgment hall. He was in a green robe, and had a long beard. He saluted Pao, and conferred with him for some time in a low voice, and then suddenly cried, 'I detect the odour of living people here.' The Judge told him what had occurred, and Kuan Ti said, 'He is a good mandarin, I wish to see him.' Liu and his secretary were presented, and Kuan Ti chatted with them in a friendly way, remarking that, complicated as the affairs of the living world were, the affairs of the dead were even worse.

Now the secretary was a brave man, but rough and uncivil in manner. He suddenly broke into the conversation, saying, 'What became of Hsüan Têh?'

Hsüan Têh was the personal name of the Emperor for whom, as a mortal, Kuan Ti had fought and given his life. It was an unpardonable piece of rudeness to call the Emperor by his personal name, especially without any term of respect, and in any case, the secretary should have used his official name, Ch'ao



Lieh. It was in even worse taste to speak in that way to the deified Kuan Ti of his former master.

Kuan Ti made no reply, but he looked very angry, got up abruptly, and left, briefly saluting Pao. The latter, as soon as he had gone, said to the secretary: 'Unhappy wretch! What have you done? For such an offence you will certainly be struck by lightning; I can do nothing to save you. How could you have dared to speak to a Minister of his Emperor by his personal name?' Liu begged hard for his secretary to be excused, so Pao said: 'All I can hope to do is to enable your secretary to die a natural death, and to see that his body is not absolutely burnt to ashes.' Then Pao took from a box a jade seal about a foot square, and told Li Hsien to wear it on his back inside his clothing.

Then Liu and Li took their leave, and were hauled up the well on to the earth again. They had hardly reached the South Gate of Fêng Tu when Li died suddenly of apoplexy. He was put in a coffin, and at once a violent thunderstorm broke. The coffin was struck by lightning and destroyed, with the grave-clothes of the deceased; but the part of Li's body which was protected by the jade seal was untouched.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is considered a great disgrace, and an obvious punishment of sin, to be struck by lightning; one of the effects either of lightning, or ordinary fire, being to destroy the inferior soul. The inferior souls of the wicked are associated with hauntings, vampirism, and other dark deeds; and it is always advisable to burn the body of a vampire or any corpse or other object that has in itself any uncanny activity, or is the cause of a haunting. Examples of this belief are to be found further on in the book.

## II

### GOOD SPIRITS AND BAD

THREE hundred years before the Christian era, the philosopher Chuang Tzū wrote, [The open criminal is punished by law ; the secret sinner is tormented by devils.]

This is a blunt statement, coming as it does from one of the most speculative of China's thinkers ; and it agrees so closely with our Western doctrines of temptation, fall, and remorse that one might be apt to regard it as the last word in Chinese demonology.

We soon learn, however, that the true discarnate spirits of evil, lying and seducing intelligences, are only one section of China's demon-kingdom. A variety of other beings are regarded as demons also, but are classified in such a way that their human or animal origin admits of little doubt, and in any case sets them apart from 'bad spirits,' in our sense of the word.

The same tendency can be traced in many countries where, as in China, there has been contact between races of diverse origin and unequal culture ; the barbarian's 'gods' are 'demons,' the barbarian is, himself, a mere 'foreign devil.' Another, an even older and more widespread motive for fear and distrust of the unfamiliar, is supplied by 'animism.' The child who smacks a chair for hurting his knee when he bumps against it, acts like those Asiatics and others, untutored in Western science, to whom everything is alive, or may be expected to act as if living

when the mysterious workings of Nature prompt it to do so. The theory that all life is one, which we briefly touched upon in the last chapter, lends itself as well to the childish fear of a grotesque rock or a screeching night bird, as to the belief that a bad man may be reborn as a beast, or that a recluse who controls himself sufficiently can acquire the power of controlling the forces of nature around him.

We can now begin to realize where the fancy of the imaginative and impressionable Chinese may lead him, with such an elastic interpretation of creation at his disposal. Let us consider, for a few minutes, some of the chief classes of spirits.

[Firstly, we have the Shên, a widely-used and comprehensive term for minor deities; spiritual beings who are sometimes delegated to avenge wrongs against Heaven or against our fellow-men, but are good, or at any rate harmless, in the main; the superior souls of human beings; the Manes of ancestors; and so forth.]

The Shên are of Yang origin (see Chapter I) and are therefore held in high honour.

[Next, we have the Kuei, whose doings furnish about ninety per cent. of the folklore of China.] Kuei, though capable of good as well of evil, are of Yin origin, and are connected with death and darkness; they are much to be respected, but more to be feared. Human ghosts, especially when they are manifestations of the P'o or lower soul, and various types of imp, goblin, and devil come under the heading of Kuei.]

'Foreign devils' are Kuei; and any art or trick showing abnormal skill is 'Kuei work.' Old Chinese books on jade and other objects of art use this expression in praise of the craftsmanship displayed.

Mo are entirely wicked spirits who—unlike certain Kuei—have never been human, and are probably to be identified with Mara the tempter, the Enemy of

Buddha. Ya Ch'a are the Yakshas of India, most probably savages whom the Chinese regard as wild and ugly hill-devils. Yao is at once an adjectival term for a weird or supernatural happening, and the name of practically any prodigy or monster not otherwise labelled. In spite of the popular saying that 'Yao arise from man, and have no existence of themselves,' many sights and sounds that cannot be explained easily are at once dubbed Yao and laid at the door of an unidentified but uncanny being. Hsiung, or 'bad luck' generally, is supposed to be caused by Yao-hsieh, 'evil or demoniacal happenings,' Pu-ching chih ch'i, 'abnormal breaths,' or Kuei ch'i, 'ghostly influences.'

[Conduct, as we noticed in Chapter I, is the real arbiter of fate; but Heaven allows the foolish, the timorous, and the wicked to be punished by supernatural agencies, and sometimes warns or protects the good through the voices or gestures of ghosts.]

To continue the list of horrors given in the larger Chinese dictionaries would reduce this chapter to a glossary; so I propose to pass over the remaining sixteen or seventeen chief classes of spectres. We shall have the pleasure of meeting some of them later on.

[Whatever the Chinese may feel, they are almost as much ashamed as we are to show inordinate credulity or terror of the abnormal. [In numberless tales, the clean-living or properly instructed man is represented as facing the spectre, boldly challenging it or attacking it with a weapon of iron or steel (this is important).] Sometimes he repeats a Buddhist Dhâraṇi or charm, or a passage from some other good book, or calmly continues his reading of ethics or philosophy as if he were alone.]

The subjective element in these manifestations is recognised, though perhaps less than it should be; for here Confucius, the founder of Chinese ethics, has to

be reckoned with. A graduate in Confucian lore must affect, if he does not sincerely feel, the Teacher's lofty disdain for spooks ; he is aware, further, that a Confucian scholar in this world has *de jure* certain powers over the lower orders in the next, where there are mandarins and officials also. His classical books if read aloud, or even left lying about, have a positively exorcising efficacy. It is generally accepted that immoral or impious students are mostly 'plucked' in the examinations, by spiritual intervention, and that a 'pass' is a certificate of rectitude in itself.

This is not, of course, the place to attack or defend the Confucian attitude. All ghost stories, and all men, have much in common ; fear, ignorance, and illness bear the same fruit everywhere, as well as animism and the distrust of foreigners. Even in Europe, serious psychical research is in its infancy.

The statement that 'devils are worshipped' in China calls for some qualification.

'Worship' is a loose expression, and so, in China, is 'devil.' Outward respect is shown to demons, as very powerful enemies, and as possible agents of avenging Heaven ; offerings are made to avert their malice, and sometimes, by persons with Buddhistic leanings, to alleviate their sufferings and gain merit for them and for the offerers. [For example, Prêtas, or hungry ghosts, have a very bad time in one of the Buddhist purgatories, and they sometimes make themselves obnoxious to human beings in the hope of stealing a human body and inveigling its occupant into the state from which they wish to escape.]

Again, demons are under the jurisdiction of certain minor deities of the Underworld, who in turn are part of the mysterious organization of the Universe. They have to be accepted, and the best made of them ; and one never knows when or where an enemy may be able to do one a bad turn.

But there is a brighter side to the picture. Evil is not worshipped for evil's sake in China; vices are not elevated to the rank of deities, so that in their honour vice may be practised as a virtue. In this respect China has consistently taken a higher stand than ancient Carthage, Greece, Rome, and post-Vedic India. Chinese statues and pictures, however ugly, are hardly ever offensive on moral grounds. In two words, demons are honoured as a precaution against evil, when they are honoured at all.

We may now dip into a few devil-tales of various dates.

[We find that, as in European tales of the same kind, manifestations are associated with a particular house, or a particular room in it.] Sometimes the evil spirits tempt the occupant to murder or suicide; at others, they merely frighten him, or play mischievous tricks. On many occasions they personate other Kuei or human beings (dead or living) in order to further their wicked designs; just as in spiritualist séances 'messages' are ascribed, by the agencies from which they originate, to the ghosts of the departed. (See Chapter XV. on 'Spiritualism.')

We are told that once upon a time Chu Chao, Sub-Prefect of Ping Yang (Shan Si) on his way to a fresh appointment, stayed at a certain inn. Part of the building, he noticed, was locked up, so he asked the host about it. 'It has been haunted for years, a Yao Kuai makes disturbances in it.' 'I'll soon get rid of him,' said Chu Chao. His wife tried to dissuade him, but he bade her, the children, and attendants go to bed in another part of the inn. He sat up, sword in hand, with a lighted lamp, in the haunted room. At midnight he heard a knock at the door, and a venerable man, with a white beard and a scarlet cap, came in. He saluted Chu Chao, who replied gruffly, calling him Yao Kuai. 'I am not what you think,' said the

old man. 'I am the Guardian Spirit of the District. Your arrival has disposed of the Yao Kuai who formerly infested the place, and I have come to thank you. Of course, if they should return, have at them with your sword!' Chu Chao saluted him, and escorted him out.

Presently there entered some creatures with black faces. He struck off their heads. Then came others, with white faces, and last of all a monster with a black snout and huge teeth. Chu Chao despatched them all. At that moment the cock crew, and he called the people of the inn to witness his victory. Entering with lanterns, they found the floor strewn with corpses, and streaming with blood. They were the bodies of Chu Chao's wife, handmaids, and children! With a terrible cry, 'I have been tricked by the Yao Kuai!' he fell dead.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, a small two-storied house stood beside the examination-hall at Ch'ên-Chou Fu. It had been abandoned and locked up, and was believed to be haunted.

The Chief Examiner T'ang, after questioning some old servants of the local tribunals, left it locked and forbade it to be opened. The weather being hot, and the town crowded with candidates, two young men, the bachelors Wang and Ch'ing, asked to be allowed to stay there. 'It is haunted,' said the examiner. They refused to believe him, and on unlocking the door and looking around, they found no sign of dust. 'The old fellow was making fun of us,' they said; 'it's evidently occupied in the ordinary way.' So they brought their baggage upstairs, and established themselves in a side room, leaving the middle room, in which was the head of the staircase, unoccupied. A little before midnight, Ch'ing went to bed, and Wang was still jeering at the tales

of the local officials when a sound was heard at the foot of the stairs. 'What's that?' cried Ch'ing. 'Probably those jokers trying to frighten us,' replied Wang. Soon they heard steps coming up the stairs. Ch'ing cried out with fear. Wang left the room, carrying a lighted candle, the flame of which burnt so low that it gave out no more light than a glow-worm. Both were now thoroughly scared and lit all the candles they had, though these gave no more than a pale gleam. Whereupon there appeared at the head of the stairs a being dressed in black, about two feet high, without eyes, nose, or mouth. Its hair, a couple of feet long also, stood stiffly on end. The two youths called loudly for help, whereupon the being, hearing someone approach, went down the stairs head first, whistling noises were heard all round the house, and everything in the place moved about of itself. The manifestations went on until cock-crow, leaving the young men nearly dead with fear.

The lights burning low, as an indication of supernatural happenings, will be noticed, as a feature commonly associated in Europe with similar manifestations.

The featureless dwarf, with hair standing on end, was probably the ghost of some inanimate object, or a goblin of a low order of intelligence. A chapter will be devoted later on to this particularly Chinese type of spook.

In the house of a certain rich merchant of Chekiang, there was an isolated room which had long been condemned as uninhabitable. One night the merchant said to a guest, 'Would you risk spending a night there?' 'Why not?' asked the guest. 'People say,' said the merchant, 'that two carriers, who went there to sleep, fled terrified at midnight. They said that a dwarf, a foot high, had climbed up the bed-



clothes and tried to get into the bed. Since then nobody has dared to sleep in the room.' 'Let me try,' said the guest, laughing. So the room was dusted and got ready, and the guest, leaving his candle alight and having his sword ready to hand, established himself in the room. At midnight there was a faint sound, and a diminutive figure came in and began rummaging round the room. It commenced operations by going through the guest's papers; then it opened his bag, pulled out the contents, and scrutinized them by the light of the candle. At the bottom of the bag was a packet of very good fire-crackers, of the real An Hwei make. While the being was examining these, a spark spurted from the candle-flame and set them off. They exploded loudly, and the creature, with a shrill whistle, disappeared. Nothing more happened that night, or the next. The dwarf did not appear again.

~[Fire-crackers are firmly believed in as exorcisers of evil; the magic effect of noise being also exemplified in the use of drums for the purpose of magic, all the world over.]

The whistling sound so often associated with spirits reminds one that the Prêtas or hungry ghosts of Buddhist legend have mouths too small to eat with, and can only emit a thin, whistling cry.

In his youth, a certain Su studied under a scholar named Han, in Su Chow. Han had a servant called A-Lung, about twenty years old; a hardworking, intelligent fellow. One night, when Su was studying upstairs, he sent A-Lung for some tea. A-Lung came upstairs very frightened, saying, 'Downstairs I met a fierce-looking person dressed in white. He did not answer when questioned. He must have been a Kuei.' Su made fun of him. Next day, A-Lung refused to go upstairs. Another servant, called Liu,

was allotted to Su. When Liu went down to get tea, he stumbled on a body lying at the foot of the stairs. It was A-Lung. He was unconscious, but still breathing; his eyes, mouth, nose and ears were full of mud, and around his back were black and blue fingermarks. When he came round, he said, 'I have seen the creature dressed in white that appeared to me yesterday. He seemed about forty years old, with a short beard, a black face, and a tongue more than a foot long. When I tried to call out he squeezed my throat. Then another Kuei, with a tall cap and a white beard, said to the first, "He is very young: spare him." I was just about strangled when Liu stumbled over me. The white-robed Kuei then retired into the house.' They put A-Lung to bed and sat up with him. During the night mysterious lights, as of glow-worms, flitted about the room. Next day A-Lung, quite dazed, refused to take food. Han sent for a magician, who examined the patient and said: —'He is possessed by a Kuei. Borrow the vermilion writing-brush of the mandarin, and I will tell you what charms you must write with it. Over the sick man's heart trace the character "rectitude"; on his neck, the character "sword"; and on each hand, the character "fire." That will cure him.' Han wrote these words in the order given, and the moment he wrote the second character for fire—'No'! screamed the Kuei, 'Do not burn me! Let me go!' So A-Lung was exorcised and cured, and lived to a good age.

The red characters are of the Yang or solar colour, and are therefore efficacious against dark spirits, who are Yin; and a mandarin, even in this life, has power (as a Confucian scholar) over low grade goblins of the kind here described.

A certain Kùeh, a native of Nanking, was very reckless while he was in liquor.

One night, at Ch'ing Ming time (the Spring festival, when graves are tended) he and some boon companions left their inn in a swaggering mood and, on the road, ran across a broken coffin, in which could be seen part of a red skirt. 'Now,' said one of K'ueh's friends, 'let's see how brave you are! Show us some of your hardihood!' K'ueh at once went up to the coffin, tapped it, and said, 'Kuai, come and have a drink!' They all shouted with laughter. At length they went on, each to his home; and just as K'ueh entered his door, he heard a low whistle behind him. He turned, and saw a black shadow, which said to him, 'The Kuai has come to drink with you.' 'Come, then!' said K'ueh, with an air of swagger; and off he set to a tavern, sat down, and called for a jar of wine and two drinking cups. The shadow followed him and sat down at the table with him. K'ueh poured it out a drink and began to chat. The other drinkers, who could not see it, thought K'ueh was mad. Now K'ueh, after a while, had had enough of it, so he said to the spectre; 'Don't get up: I'll be back in a minute,' and thereupon he took to his heels, leaving his cap on the tavern table. The waiter, who could not see the spectre, noticed a nice new cap on the table, and put it on. The following night the unlucky waiter was heard to scream out, and in the morning he was found strangled. K'ueh's cap was recognised, and the tavern-keeper came and told him what had happened. 'What a fool that Kuai must be!' said he, laughing, 'it could recognise a cap, but could not tell one man from another!'

(The Kuai—which are not to be confounded with Kuei, a more comprehensive term for phantoms—are mischievous and generally cunning demons to whom many incomprehensible mishaps are attributed. They are held to be a type of Indian devil brought into

Chinese folklore by the Buddhists. European demonology also contains curious examples of a mixture of craft and stupidity in evil spirits.)

A Mr. Ye of Peking was a close friend of Mr. Wang of I-Chou. In order to keep Wang's sixtieth birthday, Ye set out for I-Chou on his donkey, and was overtaken by a thunderstorm. Suddenly a very tall man on horseback joined him, in a way that made Ye suspicious. (Once or twice, when the lightning flashed, Ye thought he saw his tall companion stretch out a long red tongue, and exhale a black vapour that dimmed the brilliance of the flashes.)

Eventually Ye and his strange companion reached Wang's house, and the host greeted the tall man as his cousin Chang from Peking. That night, Ye and the tall man were given the same room, and Ye, feeling uneasy, asked for a servantman to be allotted to them. Ye lay down, with the tall man on the other side of the room and the house-boy between. Lucky thing for Ye! Towards midnight, the tall stranger sat up, thrust out his long tongue, picked up the house-boy in his arms, and devoured him raw, throwing down the chewed bones, crunched and broken, on the floor. More dead than alive, Ye invoked Kuan Ti, the conqueror of demons, to whom he often prayed; and amid the sound of drums and gongs, the deity Kuan Ti descended from on high, sword in hand. Immediately the Kuai changed into a butterfly, and flew round and round, evading Kuan Ti's sword-strokes. At last, in a terrific peal of thunder, Kuan Ti and the demon disappeared, and Ye fell fainting on the ground. Next morning, in a pool of blood, they found the house-boy's bones; the tall man had vanished, though his horse was in the stable. On enquiring, they found that Wang's cousin Chang had never left Peking, nor even thought of travelling

with Ye. The demon had personated him, and had deceived Wang.

A certain Sun kept a school at Yünnan Fu. On the festival of the fifteenth of the eighth moon, he allowed his pupils to sit up and have a wine party by moonlight. Suddenly they heard a bang on the table, like the falling of a big stone. While they looked at each other in astonishment, a weird creature put its head in at the door. Its dried-up face was like that of a monkey, and it had a long green beard. On its head was a full-dress cap with a red band. It came in, jumping and dancing, and when it saw the students drinking, it laughed like the crackling of bamboo in a fire. ' 'Tis a mountain Kuai,' said the youths, too scared to move. After loitering about the house for a while, the goblin went into the kitchen, where the cook, who had also been celebrating the festival, lay on his bed, drunk. The students called him from outside the kitchen, to wake up and look out for himself. Jumping off his bed, the cook seized a cudgel, and began whacking the Kuai, which was trying to seize him. At last he seized it by the girdle, and the two of them rolled, struggling, on the ground. The students crowded round, armed with sticks and knives, while the goblin, under a shower of blows, shrivelled up and turned into a ball of flesh. This the students tied to a pillar, intending, when daylight came, to throw it into the water. But just then they heard a cock crow; a loud crash resounded on the table, and the lump of flesh disappeared. All that remained was the full-dress hat, which was found to be the property of one of the students. From then onwards, the ceremonial hats of the students were constantly being missed from the school, and they concluded that the goblin had a fancy for things of that kind, and stole them.

(The *poltergeist* who announced his presence by a rap on the table reminds one strongly of European tales of 'elementals.' Similar meaningless pranks played with caps, clothing, and so forth, are related in connection with spiritualistic séances in China.)

[The belief that a brave and upright man can repel, and even exorcise evil spirits is clearly exemplified in some of these tales. The fact that fear enhances danger is well-known in China; and it is a relief to find that, among those unfortunate enough to believe in countless abnormal horrors, so much is accepted as being subjective,—or, at any rate, amenable to the influence of a strong will and a clear conscience.]

We are told how a certain Ye, a sage, was well-known to wander about N. China, in summer and winter alike, barefooted and dressed in a single cloth garment, carrying a clean sleeping-mat under his arm.

One night, resting in an inn, he asked for a retired room, as the noise and bustle of the hostelry disturbed him. 'There's only one such room in the place,' said the host, 'and it's haunted.' 'That does not matter,' replied Ye. The innkeeper showed him into a little closet; Ye swept it out, spread his mat on the floor, and quietly went off to sleep.

[At midnight, hearing the door open, he awoke. A woman entered with a rope round her neck, her tongue hanging out, and her eyeballs protruding. Behind her came a man, decapitated, carrying his head in his hands. Then came a man, entirely black, his features indistinguishable; and lastly one bloated and yellow, his face and body swollen like pumpkins.

When the four Kuei were all assembled, they cried, 'A living man! Seize him!' But they were not even able to approach his sleeping-mat. 'No good,' said the yellow spectre. 'We only have power over those who are afraid of us. When terror drives away

the superior soul, we can attack the body. This man does not fear us. There's nothing we can do.' Then Ye sat up on his mat, and pointing to his own breast with his finger—said, 'How dare you come here! You know who I am, but who are *you*?' The Kuei knelt down, and the woman explained very humbly who they were. The headless one was a murderer who had been executed; the black one had been burnt to death; the yellow one drowned; the woman had hanged herself in that very room. 'Will you believe me,' said Ye, 'if I give you some good advice?' 'Yes,' said the four Kuei. 'Then,' continued Ye, 'try and deserve reincarnation by stopping these hauntings.' They saluted, and disappeared. Next morning, Ye told the innkeeper what had happened; and the manifestations ceased.

[The inferior souls of the criminals were undergoing a Buddhist purgation, and were recommended to 'gain merit' in order to enter a different sphere of existence. The distinction between an uneasy ghost and an evil spirit is often slight in these tales; a Kuei is a devil, whatever its past history.]

Chao Ch'ing Yao, of Hangchow, was a champion chess-player. The game had a positive fascination for him. The mere sound of moving the pieces on the board was quite enough to put everything else out of his mind; if a game was going on, he must watch it.

One day, as he was passing the Êrh Shêng Nan temple, he saw there a Taoist priest playing chess with a guest. He went in and watched them play; but the Taoist boasted so much, and played so badly, that he left the temple in disgust.

That night, just after he went to bed, he saw two wills-o'-the-wisp flitting round his bed. Then a Kuei with a black face and jagged teeth parted the

curtains of the bed, and threatened him with a sword. Chao addressed the creature roughly, and it vanished.

The following night he heard a weak voice, which seemed to come from inside the bolster, saying, 'If I do play chess badly, and boast, what concern is it of yours? Is it an excuse for insulting me so? You do not fear weapons; we shall see if you can deal with incantations.' Chao knew this must be the soul of the Taoist that was threatening him, and nerved himself for trouble. Then the voice chanted 'Spirits of heaven, spirits of earth, I leave my revenge to you; drive a needle into his heart.' On hearing this Chao shivered, but quickly recovered his presence of mind, stopped his ears, and settled down to sleep. Night after night, for a whole month, the threats were repeated, but nothing happened. At length the soul of the Taoist appeared to Chao, saluted him humbly, and said:

'I have been persecuting you, partly from resentment and partly in the hope of extorting money. I have not been able to frighten you. Now, when the incantations of a magician miss their mark, they turn against him. I died yesterday. My soul is at your service, and is anxious to make reparation.'

Chao did not reply, but on sending to make enquiries at the temple, he learnt that the Taoist had cut his throat. From that time onwards Chao always knew what was going to happen at least a day in advance. The soul of the Taoist warned him.

The idea that 'curses, like chickens, come home to roost' is well brought out in this story.

The Chinese also see the unwisdom of saying to a builder 'Mind you don't fall!' or to a driver, 'Don't overturn your cart!' and so forth; not so much for fear of making the man nervous, as of letting any wandering Kuei know that he is running a risk and



fears it. The Kuei are only too ready to push a man into danger, as the following tale will illustrate.

A member of the Imperial Guard in Peking was very fond of coursing hares. One day his horse stumbled, and, running away in its fright, collided with an old man who was drawing water from a well. The old man fell in ; and the guardsman, as soon as he got his horse under control, made off as fast as he could.

The following night, the old man appeared to the guardsman, and reproached him bitterly. 'I know it was your horse's fault, and not yours, that I was pushed into the well ; but you made no attempt to save me.' Whereupon the old man began to tear the paper from the windows and break the crockery. The family gathered round, made obeisance to him, and poured out libations. 'That will not do,' said the Kuei. 'You must set up a tablet with my name on it, and every day make me an offering of pork. Further, you must make the same periodical offerings to me as you do to your ancestors. On these conditions, I shall trouble you no more.'

There was nothing for it but to promise ; and for years the offerings were maintained.

From the date of the accident, the guardsman avoided the unlucky well, until one day, when he was on duty, the Imperial Suite had to pass that way ; and when he tried to get leave of absence, he was merely made fun of by the other guards. 'What are you afraid of,' said they, 'in broad daylight, with a large party ?'

There was no help for it ; and when he passed the well, there was the old man, drawing water ! He recognised the guardsman and made a rush at him, crying, 'At last I have you ! Merciless wretch, to throw me in a well, and make no move to help me ! Take that !' And he accompanied his abuse with a shower of blows. 'But,' cried the astonished

guardsman, 'I have been making offerings to you for years and years, every day, and now you break your word!' 'What!' said the old man, 'do you take me for a Kuei! Certainly it's no thanks to you that I am still alive, for a more humane man than you passed by after you pushed me in, and rescued me from the well. Now you pretend to be surprised, and make out that you believe I'm a Kuei!'

'I tell you I don't understand,' replied the guardsman. 'Come home with me and I will show you.' When they got there, he said to the old man, 'There's your memorial tablet.' 'That's not my tablet!' cried the old man, 'and that's not my name on it!' The old man then understood that a wandering Kuei had taken advantage of the guardsman's fear of the accident in the well, in order to get the offerings made to it during all those years. In a great rage, the old man broke the tablet and spilt the offerings. A sound of mocking laughter was heard in the air, and the interloping Kuei fled.

A certain Tartar of rank, a very brave man, always held that people were too frightened altogether of Kuei and Shên, and lost no opportunity of jeering at good luck and bad.

On one occasion, during a journey across Shan Tung Province (North China), an innkeeper warned him that a certain room was haunted, and should be avoided. Nothing would satisfy the Tartar, however, but that he must sleep in that very room. About midnight, the tiles began falling from the roof. 'If that is intended to frighten me,' he cried, 'you had better drop something from a higher place than that!' Then a millstone came tumbling down, close beside him. 'If you want to frighten me,' he cried, 'drop something heavy enough to smash the table!' At once a huge stone fell on the table, and broke half of

it into small pieces. 'Miserable dog of a Kuei!' shouted the Tartar, 'you won't scare me, short of breaking my skull!' Whereupon he arose from his bed, put aside the coverings, and stood upright and motionless. Nothing stirred, and no more manifestations took place that night. The Kuei, vanquished by his bravery, took themselves off. (*Tzū Puh Yü.*)

The ceremonial of exorcising a haunted house is described in the following story.

The town house of the Ch'ia family in Peking was surrounded by a garden in which ghosts were seen nearly every night. It got to such a pitch that the head of the establishment, Ch'ia Shi, determined to have the place exorcised by Taoist priests.

The chief priest chose an auspicious day, and had an altar erected in the chief reception-hall of the house. On the walls he hung pictures of the Three Pure Ones (certain Taoist deities), the twenty-eight constellations, the thirty-six heavens, the four celestial officials, and other spirit-quelling drawings. Then he set out a number of bells and drums, lanterns, banners, and incense. Forty-nine Taoist priests took part.

After a day spent in fasting and purification, three celebrants began by burning incense and sprinkling water; then the large drum was beaten. The remaining priests then vested themselves with caps ornamented with seven stars, robes embroidered with the eight divining diagrams and the nine celestial mansions, and magic shoes 'upon which one can traverse the clouds.'

They saluted the images, invoked the beneficent genii, and spent another whole day chanting the exorcism. Then the high priest solemnly hung up a scroll giving notice of exile to the evil spirits.

Devoured by curiosity, the members of the household now pressed into the hall to see how one captured

devils. At this stage, the youngest priests occupied the five cardinal points (North, South, East, West, and Centre) each holding a banner; three celebrants stood near the high priest, one with a magic sword, the second with a rod of peachwood branching at the end, and the third with purifying water, which he sprinkled while the high priest murmured the formula of exorcism. Meanwhile the master of the house, with four of the celebrants, went from room to room and from corner to corner, 'rounding-up' the Yao Kuai in the court, where the flag-bearers, in lines, hemmed them in. The magic sword was brandished, the peach branch was waved in the air, the circle grew narrower and narrower. 'Now bring the bottle,' cried the high priest. Having made the gesture of pushing something into it, he sealed it, and gave it to a priest to be deposited in the monastery-cellar. Then, turning to Ch'ia Shi, he said, 'That is all. They have been captured. Henceforth you will be at peace.' Ch'ia Shi prostrated himself, thanked the high priest, and paid his fee. The younger members of the family, however, were a little inclined to laugh. 'Nothing happened,' said they; 'after all that preparation, what a tame wind-up! Have they really captured the devils?' 'Be quiet, you young rascals,' cried Ch'ia Shi. 'The Yao Kuai are malignant influences. They are only visible when they condense themselves. In their ethereal state, one cannot see them; they were like that when they were confined in the bottle.' Some believed this explanation, others did not; but the manifestations ceased. The author adds, 'was it due to magic, or to the imagination? I don't know.'

The mysterious *I Ching*, or 'Book of Changes' is of itself supposed to have great exorcising power.

A certain Hunanese—Chang Ch'i Shên—had the

reputation of being able to use other people's souls to work wicked spells.

The literate Wu, of Ch'iang Ling, doubted this, and on a certain occasion insulted the magician. Expecting the latter to try some trick on him, Wu sat up the following night with his lamp alight and the I Ching before him. Suddenly a wind was heard, rushing round the outside of his house; and a man-at-arms came in at the door, brandishing a spear and threatening to strike him. Wu knocked him down with the book. When he stooped to look at him, he saw that he was merely a doll cut out in paper. He slipped the paper figure between the leaves of the sacred classic. Presently entered two little Kuei with black faces, armed with axes. These, when knocked down with the book, turned out to be paper figures also, and were slipped between the leaves. In the middle of the night, a woman, weeping and wailing, came knocking at the door. 'I am the wife of Chang the magician,' she said. 'My husband and sons came to attack you, and you have imprisoned them in your book. I beg you to set them free.' 'I have neither your husband nor your sons in my book,' replied Wu. 'I have only these little paper figures.' 'Their souls are in those figures,' said the woman. 'Unless they return by the morning, their bodies, lying at home, will not revive.'

'Cursed magicians!' cried Wu. 'What can you justly expect, after what you have done to other people? I shall certainly not set them free. Out of compassion, I will let you have one of your sons back, but do not ask more.' Whereupon he handed her one of the little paper Kuei.

The next day he had enquiries made at Chang's house and learned that he and his elder son had died in the night, leaving a widow and a younger son.

Chou Yih, a student in the Imperial Academy, used to study regularly every evening. One night he saw

a little shock-headed devil, with sparks of fire in its hair. It played with his lamp and his inkstone, and made incessant noise. Chou turned fiercely upon it and addressed it in a bullying tone. It shrank back a little, but soon plucked up courage again, and came near enough for Chou to seize it. It sank down on the ground when he grabbed at it, and begged for mercy. At daybreak it made a sound like something cracking; and when Chou turned to see what it was, he saw it was an old wooden ladle, with some hundreds of rice-grains stuck to it. (*Yin Yang Tsa-h Tsu.*)

Written or printed papers are usually treated with respect, in case they may contain good or wise maxims; and as so many of the poorer classes only stay at school long enough to learn to read a few characters, it is usual to assume that all writing deserves to be preserved.

A Taoist story tells how some reckless students were warned by the Taoist gods of their sin in burning a Buddhist book to warm their study, and how they came to a miserable end.

A more serious type of student, in a thirteenth century tale, when crossing the Yang-tsze, saw a woman's corpse, which he pulled out of the water and buried. The next night he dreamed he was in a remote mountain valley; the moon was shining, and a delightful fresh breeze was blowing. The distant sound of a Pandean pipe arose, then softly died away. Suddenly a beautiful woman appeared, standing under the trees, and singing a song about the 'melodies of the Purple Mansion,' (*i.e.* the heavens).

When he presented himself at the Capital, not long after his dream, to sit for the highest literary degree, the theme given out for the candidates' essay referred to the mountain-nymph of his vision, and her songs, which he was able to utilise in his essay. He passed

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with great brilliancy, as a reward of his piety to the dead woman.

The homeless souls of those whose remains are left unburied are supposed to cry and wail in rainy weather, and it is not surprising that they are held responsible for the droughts which are so much dreaded in China.

Kuan Chung, who died 645 B.C., mentions that *withered trees*, dry bones, and putrid human remains ought to be cleared away during the spring, otherwise the heat and dryness of the summer will be excessive.

In A.D. 108, a great drought prevailed in Ho Nan, until Chou Ch'ang, the Governor of the Province, who was a very humane man, gave a public funeral to the remains of a large number of strangers who had died outside the city walls of Lo Yang. Rain then fell in abundance, and the crops were ample.

One of the reasons underlying this curious belief is the idea that ghosts who have no tomb to shelter them object strongly to the discomfort of wandering about in the wet; an unspiritual view of 'Spirits' which, as we will notice in other parts of this book, is not at all unusual among the Chinese. Their conceptions of a spook, however vivid and eerie, have a touch of the prosaic; no sharp line divides the material from the discarnate.

The Chinese viewpoint in these matters will be made, it is hoped, a little clearer in the next chapter, which will embody a sketch of Taoism in its present-day form.

### III

#### POPULAR TAOISM

THE 'Tao' as the eternal, mysterious, ineffable source of all things has been mentioned in Chapter I; and it is hardly necessary to repeat that such an abstruse doctrine of the Universe has a poor chance of holding its own in the popular mind, against ancestor-worship, Confucian matter-of-factness, and the myths and rituals of Buddhism.

Consequently the Taoism of the early sages, Lao Tzū and Chuang Tzū, the teaching of two of the deepest and most original thinkers China has so far produced, has steadily lost ground for the past twenty centuries. It is no longer distinguished either by sublimity of conception, or by the mental or moral elevation of its priesthood.

The great Taoist maxim of Wu Wei, or 'inaction,' is best understood if we regard it as meaning something between 'non-assertiveness' and 'passivity,' or 'leaving things to take their course.' As the Christian aims at complete resignation to the Will of God, so the Taoist idealises that state of harmony with the scheme of the Universe which shall render him indifferent to the ups and downs of life, while he participates, in a passive sense, in the operations of Nature.

Here comes, as may be expected, a parting of the ways. One school of Taoists—the earlier and more reputable—looked to the hermit life as a means of bending the will to Tao; of rising above the petty



cares and desires of this world, and thus enjoying all things by renouncing them. We do not know where or when it was discovered that self-control is the only short cut to contentment; but it was very early in human history. Taoist legend claims that its Hsien ('immortals' or 'men of the mountain-hermitages') so conquered their own nature that they acquired mysterious powers over the winds and the clouds, the animals, birds, and trees. They became expert in trance, levitation, bilocation, and all the wonders generally classed under 'magic'; and this not to exploit the credulity of the ignorant, but purely as the reward of self-conquest.

The other school, more sharply alive to the work-a-day side of the Taoist ideal, attacked the secrets of Nature in the hope of finding the elixir of life, the food or drug that should confer immortality; the transmutation of metals; and other tangible—even marketable—proofs of being 'at one with the Infinite.' Tales of the wonders worked by the Hsien were of immense aid to them in capturing the popular fancy; and the educated classes, to whom the dogmas of the Unity of Life and the permutations of Yang and Yin were already well known, and were accepted as compatible with the Confucian and Buddhist tenets, succumbed to the poetical aspect of Taoism and presumably were gradually brought to think that, on various grounds, 'there might be something in it after all.'

During the artistic and literary revival of the T'ang Period (A.D. 618-907), the addiction of all classes to the mystery and magic of Tao was notorious. The Confucian writers of the day were bitterly sarcastic about it; the materialists, openly and grossly hostile. After a few returns to Court favour, at long intervals, the adherents of a 'Taoist' system which Lao Tzū would have repudiated with scorn sank

steadily to the level of the planchette-manipulator in his village shrine, and the fortune-teller at his street stall.

The student of Chinese folklore will notice that the people have little or no difficulty in giving intermittent allegiance to diverse and even contradictory cults ; and, particularly, that Northern 'Buddhism'—so often acclaimed as the 'religion of a vast section of humanity'—is largely professed by people who also worship ancestors, honour Taoist Hsien, and follow the Confucian morality. Taoist and Buddhist personages sometimes share the same temple, and both are honoured by people who believe—in flat contradiction to Buddha's teaching—in a Personal God and the survival of the individual soul !

To the artist and the craftsman, Taoism old or new, pure or mixed with Buddhism, has for many centuries proved a fruitful source of inspiration. In poetry and landscape, in lacquer, pottery and carving, Taoist ideas and motives have been immortalised with the taste, skill and consummate mastery of material for which the Chinese have so long been famous. Much of what the world owes to the arts of the Far East, those arts owe to Taoism.

But for this fascinating subject alone, a whole book would not suffice.

The Taoist augurs or 'priests' have a definite organisation and an official Head, who was recognised by the old Imperial Government ; but they may be regarded, by the collector of ghost and devil tales, as paid practitioners of magic and fortune-telling, and at that we may leave them.

A certain Ch'ia, a native of Ho Nan, was always stupid, in fact almost an imbecile from birth. His parents were dead, and his elder brother, who was an educated man, put him to work in the fields. His

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one fixed ambition was to go to Heaven. One day, a Taoist adept passing by, said to him, 'I have learned that you want to go to Heaven. Close your eyes, hold my arm, and don't be afraid.'

The youth felt himself carried into space. The wind whistled, there was a sound of waves, and in a few moments he was told to open his eyes. A vision of fairy palaces unfolded before him. 'I shall be busy here for a little while,' said the Taoist, 'take some refreshment.' He offered Ch'ia a cup of wine, and when it was about half drunk, he asked for the remainder saying, 'As you are not going to stay here, give me back the rest, and amuse yourself until I return.'

The Taoist only seemed to stay away a very short time; soon he rejoined Ch'ia who—with closed eyes, and holding the Taoist's arm—was wafted back to his native village in a few moments. As soon as his elder brother set eyes on him he gave a cry of fear. 'Are you a man or a Kuei?' he said. 'Why should I be a Kuei?' replied Ch'ia. 'Did I not go into the fields this morning, as usual? A Taoist adept took me to Heaven for a few minutes, and now I'm back again.' 'This morning? You have been away for years!'

The point of the story is that the half cup of wine was really a small dose of the Elixir of Life. The opinion that time on earth is merely a relative expression is shown in the 'Rip Van Winkle' tales of all countries.

An elderly Taoist priest, who flourished during the eighteenth century, had the fresh face and abundant hair of a young man, except for a bald spot on the top of his head. When questioned about it, he replied, 'Have you noticed that grass grows quickly by the wayside, but that where the people pass to and fro the

ground is bare? That bald spot is where my soul enters and leaves my body.' i

One night, when he stayed at a Buddhist monastery, the monks offered him a cell, but he refused it, and spent the night in the courtyard. Next morning, at dawn, the monks saw him seated on the wall of the compound, breathing in the brightness of the sun; and above his head was the shining form of a chubby child, inhaling and revelling in the sunbeams.

This story symbolizes the belief of the Taoists that deep draughts of morning air nourish the superior soul (illustrated by the vision of the cherub). The inhalations of Yang influence from the rising sun would also be considered beneficial.

The hygienic value of pure air and sunshine is not realised in China as it should be, in spite of tales of this type; but the interesting feature, from our point of view, is the rosy infant as a symbol of the soul. The metaphor is an unusual one, and may have come from a foreign source. At one time it was thought that Taoism itself was of Indian origin, although it is clearly allied to the earliest animistic beliefs of the Chinese, and there is evidence of its existence long before the period of Lao Tzū (the sixth century B.C.). Nowadays there is a tendency to discount the vast antiquity formerly attributed to Indian traditions, and to vindicate the far less extravagant claims of the Chinese records.

A peasant was one day selling his pears in the market-place. They were unusually good, and fetched a high price. A ragged Taoist priest begged for one, but the peasant cursed him and sent him off. The priest would not go, but said, 'You have hundreds of pears and would not have missed one. Why are you so angry?' The onlookers advised the peasant to give him one, but to no purpose. Presently they bought one and handed it to the priest. 'I am not

greedy,' said the grateful priest, 'and now you shall taste some of my pears.' So he ate the pear, carefully preserving the pips; drew a knife, made a little hole in the ground with it, and sowed the pips. Then he filled in the hole, and watered the ground. Immediately a sprout grew up, became a fine pear tree, and in a few minutes was loaded with exquisite fruits. The Taoist plucked them one by one, and handed them to the spectators, who ate them, down to the very last. Then, with a single stroke of his knife, the Taoist cut off a branch of the pear tree, placed it on his shoulder, and went away. Everyone in the marketplace had crowded round to watch, including the worthy peasant, who left his pears to see what was going on. When he returned to his little cart, every pear had gone, and one of the handles had been broken off and was missing. He now saw that the Taoist had, by magic, worked a trick on him, and he rushed off in pursuit. At the corner of the street he found the broken handle of his little cart, but the magician had vanished; and the people only laughed at him for his pains.

The earlier Taoist lore embraces wonderful accounts of adepts who tamed animals by studying their likes and dislikes; taking care not to excite them, and keeping calm when tending or handling them. These wonder-working Hsien held conversations with birds and animals, and talked without fear to ghosts and demons as well.

The musician, P'ao Pa, made birds and fishes dance as he played his lute. Shê Wên was able to induce changes of weather by striking different notes—a certain chord of four notes had such magical power that beautiful mild weather was evoked; sweet dew fell from the Heaven, and fountains of wine arose from the earth!

(Magic draughts of wine seem to have made a strong appeal to the later Taoists also, as we have seen. May not the experience of Faust in Auerbach's cellar have been a remote echo of a Taoist tale?)

Yen Shê became a magician through the cultivation of his enormous will-power. He could cure hesitation and giddiness in his pupils, so that they became miraculously accurate at archery, and had no fear of precipices, rapids, or wild beasts. His puppets sang and danced before the Emperor like living creatures; when one of them made eyes at the Court ladies, the Emperor had it cut open, believing it to be human, but it was found to be a doll of wood and leather.

A still more famous juggler, described as a 'Wizard from the West,' appeared before the Emperor Muh about 1000 B.C. This man—the legend has it—was able to float through the air, and walk through fire and water unhurt; to pass through solids; to assume the shape of an animal; to keep his 'soul' in the form of an inanimate object—a favourite exploit in Western fairy tales. He took the Emperor with him into the dazzling light and ineffable harmony of a heaven above the sun and moon for what seemed to be a period of three years—and all within a few moments during which the Emperor was unconscious, in the midst of a banquet.

When the Emperor wondered at this, the wizard told him that time and space were illusions, and that the mind could be rendered independent of both.

The Taoist legends of the Hsien or hill-sages remind us still more of our European folklore, when we see pictures or carvings of these worthies themselves. Wrinkled and white-bearded, with high-crowned caps, and knotted staves, dwelling in caves or hollow trees; datelessly old, full of weird wisdom, yet capable of superhuman activity and by no means devoid of a certain goblin humour. Many legends speak of them

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as 'Western men,' meaning probably natives of the West of what is now China; but indirect evidence is not wanting to connect them with Central Asia, India, or even Europe.

The elves and gnomes of our Western fairy-lore were most probably 'foreigners' of some sort; they may have been Chinese, or—which is more likely—we and the Chinese may have come in contact with them in Central or Western Asia, or have heard of them from some common source. It is, at any rate, noticeable that the markedly un-Chinese features of some of the Hsien have been faithfully adhered to, both in Chinese and Japanese art, down to to-day.

Now that the examination of the books and other treasures found within recent years to the North and West of China is well on its way, the old theories of the isolation of China are doomed. A thousand, nay fifteen hundred years ago, Central Asia must have been as full of mental and commercial activity as Central Europe was in the Middle Ages. From the Pacific to the Caspian, from the Panjab to Korea, merchants and missionaries passed unceasingly; books and pictures, pottery and carvings were carried constantly to and fro. In the light of our new knowledge of the history of Central Asia, the likelihood of meeting a Chinese Hsien in a German fairy tale is just as great as the probability of a common origin accounting for the grotesque animal 'motives' in the Han jades of China and in the Irish illuminated manuscripts of the eighth century.

Popular Taoism has much to tell of the peach tree. A paradise containing a tree which bears life-giving fruit is common to many folk mythologies; and the Chinese identify it with the Western garden-elysium of Hsi Wang Mu, the Queen-Mother of the West, a sort of Chinese Juno.

In the *Han Wu Ti Nei Chuan*, it is related that the

Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (140-86 B.C.) actually met this Fairy Queen, and received a gift of magic peaches from her.

A strange maiden dressed in blue, and very beautiful, suddenly appeared to the Emperor one spring day, and told him that on the seventh day of the seventh month the Queen of the West would visit him for a few moments. When the day arrived, the Emperor put on his ceremonial attire and stood on the steps of the palace, waiting. Very late in the evening a cloud arose, and a sound of music was heard. Then there approached a guard of honour, following which appeared Hsi Wang Mu. She entered the hall and seated herself on the West side, facing the East. With her own hands, she set out a feast of fairy fruits which do not grow on the earth, and sent a handmaid to fetch some peaches. They were larger than the ordinary fruit of the peach-tree; the Fairy Queen ate three, and gave the Emperor four. Wu kept the stones and told her he was going to plant them; but she said that the tree only bore fruit once in three thousand years, and would not grow in China.

The wood of the ordinary peach is used in magic, in order to vanquish evil spirits.

A little book of Taoist maxims, illustrated with rather curious tales, is often circulated in China by well-meaning persons as an act of merit. This book is the *T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien*, or 'The Exalted One's Response and Retribution Tract.' Though attributed to the Exalted One (*i.e.*, the old quietist Lao Tzū), it is a sixteenth century compilation, and savours here and there of Confucian and Buddhist morality, as might be expected.

The idea of the book is that the Spirit-Lords of the Pole Star, and a whole hierarchy of other Shên, or good and wise genii, report to Heaven all the transgressions, however secret, of mankind, and that



strict and exact justice is done to all ; that man himself invites good or evil fortune, and that the reward of good or of evil, is as the shadow which accompanies the body.

The Confucian duties to one's fellow-men and the Buddhist compassion to the animal kingdom are enjoined, side by side with Taoist condemnations of selfish, pushing and overbearing conduct. Disrespect to the hearth-fire and to the stars are severely condemned. The virtuous are attended by good spirits, the wicked by fierce, avenging spirits ; and the shortening of life is much emphasised as a punishment of sin.

A few of the tales are worth quoting briefly. They vary somewhat in different editions.

A certain Wan Têh Hsü had a copy of the *Kan Ying P'ien* which had been his family's guide for four generations. One day a wandering Taoist priest came to his house, and gave a little sermon on the unity of the soul with Tao. When it was over he remarked, ' You have a precious gem in your house. I am aware of its radiance. Where do you keep it ? '

Wan replied, ' In my poor house there is nothing of value.'

But the priest led Wan to the place where the book lay, and said, ' This holy book is the treasure. It embodies the teaching of the three religions ' (that is, of Confucius, Lao Tzŭ and Buddha) . . . ' continue practising your self-control and your honesty in dealing with others, and your heavenly reward is certain.'

For thirty years longer, Wan continued to lead an exemplary life, and eventually he and his whole family went to heaven, escorted by spirits and the sound of music, in the presence of his fellow villagers. The neighbours built a monument to him, and made offerings to him for years after.

A poor scholar, Shang Shih Yin, who lived under the Ming Dynasty, once pawned some clothing in the depth of winter to help the gratuitous printing and distribution of the *Kan Ying P'ien*. At the time he was so poor that he was reduced to writing and copying out poems for other people.

A poem written by Shang happened to catch the Emperor's eye at a festival, so he was sent for and appointed to a minor post.

He thereupon went to the temple of Kuan Ti (a deified warrior, whose cult is very widespread) to thank him for his prosperity. Kuan Ti appeared to Shang, and told him it was all due to his piety in helping the distribution of the *Kan Ying P'ien*, exhorting him, further, to be just and fair to high and low alike and not to abuse his power.

Shang continued to prosper, and his example was the cause of many men reforming their lives.

\* \* \* \* \*

A certain Ch'ing Tsing was once called in by the parents of a girl who was tormented by a demon. When he spent the night in the house, she was left in peace; but the attacks recommenced as soon as he left. So he wrote on a slip of paper, 'Ch'ing Tsing is here,' and the girl's father pasted it on the door. After that the demon left the girl and never returned.

(The use of names in controlling, not demons only, but other creatures is common in magic all over the world.)

Wang An Shih, a brilliant scholar, statesman, and would-be social reformer (A.D. 1021-1086) was credited by our Taoist tale-teller with the revival of mutilation as a punishment for certain crimes. For this act of brutality, his son—who helped him in his official work—was taken from him by death at a comparatively early age. Wang had a Buddhist temple built in memory of his son; and while a memorial service

was being held there, he had a vision of his son undergoing excruciating punishment for his share in his father's undue severity.

Wang An Shih was eventually cashiered, and lived to see his laws all repealed before he died in exile. Soon after his death a relative, who had been very ill, reported that during his sickness, he had seen Wang An Shih's soul in torment, and he exhorted the surviving members of the family to 'accumulate merit.'

(A striking example of the extent to which Buddhism and Taoism have amalgamated.)

A wicked man named Fan Ch'i died suddenly, and twenty-four hours later came to life and told his wife to gather all their relations and friends together. He then told them that the Judge of the Dead (a Buddhist Deity) had sent him back to earth to make an example of him. The wretched Fan Ch'i then seized a knife, and mutilated the various organs of his body, explaining that he had sinned through all his senses. He lingered for six days, still calling upon those around him to be warned by his evil life and its punishment.

\* \* \* \* \*

A curious story of a pharisaical person whose sins found him out, is told of a clever scholar named Yu, who lived in the sixteenth century A.D.

Although he took his degree at sixteen, and was a man of great learning, he was still in dire poverty at the age of thirty, and had to give lessons for a livelihood.

Thereupon he joined a small society of fellow-scholars, and with them offered regular sacrifices to Wên Ch'ang, the god of literature, whose abode is among the stars of the Great Bear. He was careful not to desecrate written papers; he set captive birds at liberty; he refrained from killing animals, from uncharitable talking, and from every kind of licentious behaviour.

After doing all these meritorious things, he failed seven successive times in an examination. He married, and had five sons ; his fourth son died very young, and his third son wandered out into the street when he was only eight years old, and disappeared. He had four daughters, of whom three died, and his wife lost her sight weeping for her children.

When he was forty-seven years of age, he and his blind wife and their one remaining daughter were seated in their poor little cottage. He had written a most moving invocation to the Hearth Spirit—one of the minor Taoist gods—and burnt it, beseeching the spirit to carry his petitions to Heaven. Poor and wretched, they were huddled together, trying to console one another for their misfortunes, when there came a knock at the door.

Yu opened the door, and an elderly, bearded man bowed, entered and sat down. He said his name was Chang, and that he had travelled a long distance to visit and console Yu, whose sorrows had come to his knowledge.

Yu was greatly amazed, and he began to feel much awe and respect for the stranger. Then he told Chang how he had been pursued by misfortune all his life, and how his prayers and self-denials had been fruitless.

‘I have been quite well aware of your troubles for years,’ replied Chang. ‘I am sorry to say that it is your evil thoughts which have nullified your efforts. Your sole idea has been personal fame, and your prayers to Heaven have been mere murmurings and accusations. I fear you have further trouble in store.’

‘But,’ said Yu, ‘for years I have followed the rules of right conduct. Can you then say I have worked for mere vain-glory?’

Chang replied: ‘One of the rules is that which inculcates reverence for written characters. But you

have let your pupils and fellow-students defile written papers in every way, and done nothing to stop them. You set birds at liberty, but eat the flesh of kids and shell-fish. You are sarcastic and overbearing in argument, and wound everyone with whom you dispute by your bitterness of speech. Do you think you can deceive Heaven? Heaven has deputed a spirit to watch you, and for years you have been full of proud, cruel and unclean thoughts. Your bad habits of mind have become part of your nature. You cannot now escape the calamities which threaten you ! ’

Yu now knew that it was one of the gods who had come to warn him, and begged him to have mercy and save him. So Chang replied : ‘ You have always loved truth, and have diligently studied the works of the sages, but the good impulses are only fleeting ; selfishness and vanity rule your heart. Be patient and persevere. Bravely banish evil thoughts, do a good action whenever you have the opportunity, and do not stop to think whether it is advantageous to yourself. Within your home you have always served me with reverence. Heaven has therefore given me permission to warn you.’

Then the stranger rose and came further into the house. Yu followed him to the hearth, where he vanished. He at once realised that his ghostly visitor was the Hearth Spirit, so he burned incense in his honour and made a deep obeisance of gratitude.

He began his reformed life the very next day. He changed his literary name, made frequent invocations to Kuan Yin, and for a long time practised rigorous control of his thoughts as well as of his words and actions.

On the last day of each month he made a list of his acts of self-denial on yellow paper, and burned it before the Spirit of the Hearth.

At length, when he was fifty years old, he obtained the post of tutor to the son of the Prime Minister ; in two years' time he passed for Licentiate, and one year later took his Doctor's degree.

On a certain occasion, he went to visit another official, and something in the face of one of his host's adopted sons seemed familiar to him. On questioning the lad, he discovered him to be his own child, who had wandered away at the age of eight. The official was rejoiced, and restored the boy to his father. Yu took him home, and the joy of the poor blind mother was great as she mingled her tears with those of her long-lost son. As they cried together, the youth took his mother's face between his hands and gently touched her eyes with his tongue. Her sight was restored, and Yu's happiness knew no bounds.

From that time, all his affairs prospered. His son married, and had seven clever and successful sons. Yu wrote a book describing his faults and his reform, and lived to the age of eighty-eight years.

Many years ago a certain Yang Pao of Hung Nung was renowned for his amiable and compassionate nature. When only nine years old, he saw a yellow finch, which an owl had torn and mangled, fall from a tree to the ground, where it would have been devoured by insects. He put the wounded bird inside his coat and took it home. He nursed and fed it until it could fly again, and every morning it would go forth, and return to pass the night in a box which Yang had made for it, to protect it from insects.

After coming and going daily, in this way, for several years, the finch came in with a flock of other birds, flew round the hall uttering plaintive cries, and went away. Very late that night, while Yang was studying the classics, a boy dressed in yellow came to him and said : ' I was an envoy of Hsi Wang Mu, the

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Queen of the Immortals, on an official mission, when an owl seized me, and you saved my life. Please accept your reward. These four jade rings from the Southern Ocean will keep your sons and grandsons upright and pure; four of your family will become Prime Ministers.'

The envoy handed over the four jade rings and took his leave.

From that day onwards, Yang's fame and emoluments grew steadily. His son Chên begot Ping, and Ping begot Pin, and all four in turn became Prime Ministers, as the envoy had foretold.

The moral tone of this little treatise on 'Rewards and Retributions' is distinctly good, and the stories appended to it show the Taoist ethic in a favourable light. The smug 'Sandford and Merton' fashion in which the righteous man is shown to receive his reward in this world is relieved by ingenuous dippings into folklore, such as the prohibition of stepping over food, or over a person lying down; cooking food with a fire made of decayed sticks; and other really trivial things.

The impostures and darker superstitions of modern Taoism which have had so much to do with its gradual loss of prestige and intellectual decay, may now be briefly considered.

The following trick, for example, was played by a Taoist 'adept' upon a credulous official.

Chang Li Hao was an eminent member of the Board of Rites, and a great believer in Taoism. On his retirement he went to Nanking with a fortune of one million six hundred thousand dollars or thereabouts. There his friend Lang introduced him to a Taoist who claimed to know the recipe for the elixir of life, to be able to turn apricot-stones into nuggets of silver, and so on.

This worthy informed Chang that to produce the elixir would cost a million silver dollars, and the latter, who very much dreaded the idea of death, decided to risk his money. He fasted, and had the furnace erected in a lucky position under the direction of a soothsayer. The adept began by consuming a hundred loads of charcoal and fifty thousand silver dollars. Chang himself watched the furnace during the day, and left his servants on guard at night. This went on, night and day, for three months, and the fire melted away eight hundred thousand dollars, but of the elixir there was no trace. Chang was rather uncomfortable, but the Taoist reassured him, saying that it would require a million dollars to produce the elixir. On swallowing the drug, however, the needs of the body and the changes of the seasons would give him no further trouble; he would be able to fly through space at will; and he would escape death. There only wanted now two hundred thousand dollars to complete the process. Chang accordingly paid up, but had the adept watched closely, day and night. When the million dollars had all been made away with, the Taoist went out, followed by Chang's watchman; but he suddenly disappeared and did not come back. Chang went to the furnace and found that all his silver had been hopelessly lost. He examined a parcel of clothing left behind by the alchemist, and found inside it a letter to himself. It ran something like this:

'Thief that you are! The million dollars which you have acquired by iniquitous practices have been effaced from the list of your sins in the records of the Underworld. I have done you a great service and I hope you appreciate it.'

As may be expected, the name of Lao Tzū inscribed on a seal is considered a powerful charm against all evil. He is often designated on these magical seals,



'The Greatly Exalted Venerable Prince,' and he is revered as the first and greatest of a succession of professional exorcists, of whom Chang Liang (died 189 B.C.) and Chang Tao Ling (born A.D. 34 and supposed to have lived 123 years) are among the earliest concerning whom a few fragmentary legends remain.

Chang Tao Ling was spiritual and temporal head of what constituted, for a time, a 'state within a state' in the hill country of Western China. This organisation was broken down and absorbed in the civil state in A.D. 215, when the enfeebled Han Dynasty was on the verge of ruin. Since then, the Taoist fraternity have held their headquarters in the province of Kiang Si, and a succession of high priests or chief devil-quellers have exercised some sort of authority over the Taoist 'clergy' down to modern times.

Pictures of Chang Tao Ling are issued under their rules for practising magic, showing him as an old bearded man of forbidding aspect, riding on a tiger. His functions were very similar to those of the equally or even more popular Chung K'uei, of whom we shall have more to say later.

The initiation of a Taoist exorcist or Wu shows a certain resemblance to the 'ordination' of medicine-men in savage communities.

The novice, who is nearly always the son of a Wu, will have had the opportunity of watching the practices of his father, and thus, of receiving a certain amount of instruction in sorcery from boyhood.

Often his family will keep a shop, where spells and charms are printed, paper effigies made for sacrificial use, etc., and his final training will be completed by an elderly relative or friend 'in the profession,' who adopts him as understudy and eventual successor.

For seven to ten days the youth observes a strict 'tabu' by abstaining from alcohol, meat, fish, leeks,

onions, and garlic. He washes often during the 'vigil,' wears clean clothing, and recites many spells and charms. Meanwhile, he must not listen to music, or entertain vain or evil imaginings. In dignified and restful practices he must concentrate his mind on the Tao.

On the last day of the vigil, his family provide funds for an elaborate sacrificial service in the Taoist temple of the district. At the right moment, the candidate is carried into the temple, in clean clothes, covered by a sacrificial vestment, formally catechised as to his novitiate and his conduct during the 'vigil,' and asked whether he now feels competent to drive away spectres. He answers in due form, and in proof of his powers, he agrees to climb a ladder of sword-blades barefooted.

The candidate is carried, without touching the earth, to the sword-ladder. (By not touching the earth, he is kept apart from Yin or dark influences.) A bundle of charms and a set of baby-clothes are fastened on his back; a bell is rung by the celebrating priest, and rice and salt are strewn about, amid loud incantations to keep away bad spirits; then the neophyte, having climbed bare-footed to the top of the ladder, throws down charms among the congregation, who eagerly gather them up and keep them as precious devil-quellers.

He then descends, is formally 'passed' as a fully qualified Wu, and goes home to the strains of a band in a sedan-chair. A formal intimation of his new dignity is also sent to his family by the celebrant who conducted the initiation.

The aim of a particularly heroic Wu, we are told, is to tread the twelve-stepped sword-ladder nine times, thus making up a total of 108 rungs, and achieving the dignity of subduing the 36 celestial and 72 earthly 'evil influences.'

Walking on swords, sitting on spikes, treading on hot coals, and similar dangerous practices, are common to the magical fraternity in many countries ; notably among the West Indian negroes, down to modern times, whom crowds of European and other spectators gather to see as they run barefoot across the embers of wood-fires at initiation.

The idea in China is to impress the evil-spirits with the superhuman powers and qualities of the Wu ; but there is reason for thinking that the blood-sacrifices to the old gods of animism also enter into the question. The fanatical excitement or ecstasy of the Wu would be accepted by an animist as evidence of being possessed by the god ; and blood, the essence of bodily life, would be the sacrificial price paid for the privilege of averting or expelling evil and for securing good harvests. The living grain, containing the vital sap of the plant, requires moisture ; what better moisture than the blood of the newly-ordained Shaman ?

Besides the self-mutilation of wizards, history records blood-sacrifices in which human victims have been killed, and even eaten, in different parts of the world. Prisoners were massacred by the Mexicans, and children by the Phoenicians, to honour the Sun-god (source of all vitality) and to fertilise the earth ; wholesale sacrifices of human victims have been made (and probably still are) in West Africa, and there are traditions of similar rites having been formerly observed in Northern Europe.

The anaemia and morbid fancies following loss of blood may quite well be mistaken by a Shaman for enhanced spiritual insight ; and there are reasons for believing that, under the influence of hysterical excitement, treading on swords or hot coals is not so painful as it would be to a man in normal health.

The deafening noise of gongs and other 'musical' instruments which nearly always accompany rituals of self-torture, appears to distract the Wu from the pain of his cuts, just as a severely injured soldier will sometimes continue fighting, in the din and turmoil of a pitched battle, and apparently feel little until his wounds are dressed.

The fire-treading ritual, which sometimes accompanies the other ceremonies of initiating a Wu in China, mostly resolves itself into a fairly rapid trot over an exceedingly thin layer of glowing charcoal; a leathery-footed peasant, accustomed to travelling and working unshod, would take but little hurt from it. Similarly the sword-ladder is often so arranged that, by putting the foot at each step on the edges of two parallel—and very blunt—swords, there is hardly any pain.

A more interesting tale of Taoist prowess in the olden times is the statement that, on a certain day of the fifth lunar month, they used to liquefy 'five stones' in order to make burning glasses or lenses. This story was known to a writer named Wang Ch'ung nearly two thousand years ago, and has been quoted to show that the use of glass, and the properties of a lens, were understood in China from a very early date.

Mirrors for 'attracting fire from the sun' were known in the Chou Period (1122-255 B.C.), and a dutiful son was expected to carry in his girdle a mirror for obtaining fire in good weather, and a fire-drill for use on cloudy days.

It is only fair to mention too, that the Taoist 'physician' Pien Ch'iao, twenty-four centuries ago, is supposed to have originated the study of the pulse of sick persons; and that it is in connection with his achievements that we first hear of an operation performed while the patient was under an anaesthetic.

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The foregoing notes will, it is hoped, show that old-time animism is still a living force in China, and that the Taoist cult grew out of it, reached a certain dignity and originality of outlook, and gradually sank back to the witchcraft and mystery-mongering of semi-barbarous days.

We have seen that the doctrines of the unity of life, and the identity of all forms of life, helped Taoism and were helped by it. We shall now consider briefly the influence of another type of monism, introduced from India by the followers of Buddha.





“Statue of LOHAN”

## IV

### CHINESE BUDDHISM OF TO-DAY

MOST readers of books about folk-lore have a certain knowledge of Buddhism, so the following remarks are merely of a general nature, and are intended to link the doctrines of Buddha with long-existing local beliefs, derived from Taoist and other sources.

Gotama, a well-born and affluent member of the Sâkiya clan, now generally styled Buddha, or 'the Enlightened One,' began a reform in Hinduism during the sixth century B.C. or thereabouts.

The doctrines he emphasized were the denial of a Personal God, the suppression of all desire—good or bad—and the eternal, automatic, and ruthless operation of a law of cause and effect well known under the title of 'Karma.' He held that all existence was one, and that the aim to be followed, in every state of being, was to reach a condition of calm so utterly passive, so negative to all that characterises conscious life, as to be confused by some thinkers with self-annihilation, with total absorption into the Absolute. This is the much discussed condition of 'Nirvâna.'

The denial of individual personality was another of his main tenets. Man was to be regarded as a mere bundle or tangle of perceptions, impressions, feelings and memories. Some authorities argue that he did not insist on this; but, in any case, the Hindu dogma of transmigration or re-birth was very soon grafted on to his system, and rendered the 'Karma' theory more workable as a deterrent to evil and an incentive



to gaining merit, than the impersonal idea of man. If one's own good and evil deeds merely had the effect of swelling the total of good and bad 'Karma' in the Universe, instead of reacting, sharply and exactly, in some future life, upon the person who did them, there would be but little to encourage one in avoiding sin or accumulating 'merit.'

The ascetic or monastic state, already well known in India in Buddha's time, was utilised and organised by him with much thought and care, and in a form which showed considerable knowledge of human nature. Buddha saw in monachism a powerful aid to self-conquest; and in due time the invocation of Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha—that is, 'The Enlightened One,' his Law, and the Assembly of the Faithful—was even used as a sort of prayer to a Trinity, and esteemed a highly efficacious engine of spiritual progress.

Further, if 'Karma' be made to account for everything human or superhuman, living or inanimate, as the consequence of some precisely equivalent cause in the past, we should find, and do find, that the Gods and Devils of Hinduism were accepted by Buddhism as part of the scheme of things. The gods, however, only enjoyed temporary godhead, and the demons suffered temporary devildom for their respective good and bad actions in other states; they were as much tied to the wheel of everlasting 'Karma' as men and animals. They are therefore made to appear in Buddhist tales as servants of the Law, or rebels against it, as the case may be; partly, perhaps, because in the Hinduism of Buddha's time and native place many of them had already 'seen better days,' and their influence was on the wane.

Sects and schisms began to spring up very soon after Buddha's death. In a sense, Buddhism itself was a sect of Hinduism, a cold and pessimistic offshoot of that highly complex religion. As originally taught,

Buddhism aimed at a state of enlightened but complete self-abnegation in this life, and at something so like annihilation in the next that the Buddha himself, though very eloquent in saying what Nirvâna was not, carefully refrained from explaining what it was. For this reason among others, and in view of the rapid growth or renaissance, in Southern India, of a barbarous and magic-loving type of Hinduism, the two main divisions of Buddhism arose.

The Hinayâna, or so-called Lesser Vehicle, kept more closely to the non-theistic or passive teaching of Buddha, and is to-day represented by the Buddhism of Ceylon, Burmah and Siam.

The Mahâyâna, or so-called Great Vehicle, embraces the seriously modified or even 'heretical' Buddhism of China, Japan and Korea, and is the type to which attention has to be drawn in this book.

Though newer than Hinayâna, it is nowadays stated by some scholars that the germ of the Great Vehicle was in existence in Buddha's lifetime, or very soon after his death. It has been described as comprising the doctrines of One Soul, immanent in the Universe; of a Divine Helper of Man, and various partly-deified intercessors; of individual immortality and spiritual growth; of faith allied to good works, and as a means of producing them; and of the willingness of those advanced in holiness to make sacrifices for others—as distinct from the original (Hinayâna) pursuit of desire-killing and merit-gaining solely in order to achieve the loss of one's own personality.

Clearly this was not Buddha's doctrine. Further, with the lapse of time, and during its progress through Central and Eastern Asia, Mahâyâna came into close contact with Christianity, Persian Sun-Worship, animism and what not, and in its modern form it is a somewhat thinly disguised solar cult—with a considerable leaning towards magic.

One of the personifications of the 'Enlightening Principle,' Amitâbha Buddha (in Chinese O-Mi-T'o-Fo, in Japanese Amida Butsu) became practically a Supreme God; and around him gathered a Court of Bodhisattwa (in Chinese, Pusa), beings who of their own will remained outside of Nirvâna to help and intercede for the imperfect and the suffering. Nirvâna itself became a place of reward, namely, the 'Western Lotus Paradise'; a fairy-land of jewelled flowers, wonderful scenery and aesthetic enjoyments, rather like the 'earthly paradise' of the Taoist tales.

Of the Bodhisattwa, the best known to Europeans is Kuan Yin, the so-called 'Goddess of Mercy.'

Originally a male saint or intercessor, this conception became confused with that of a minor Chinese divinity, patroness of sailors; and in point of date there are good reasons for supposing that Christian influences are not lacking. As the patroness of mothers and children; as the mediatrix between the Supreme Deity and those undergoing punishment in this world and the next; as a female being exalted to a position fundamentally different from that of the Hindu or other Asiatic goddesses; we see in Kuan Yin a refreshingly pure and attractive reflection of Western traditions concerning the Mother of Christ.

In Ti Tsang, a male helper of the souls suffering in the Buddhist purgatories, we have another Bodhisattwa who plays an important part in Chinese popular Buddhism. He is represented as a shaven monk, holding in one hand his traveller's staff, in the other, the Jewel of the Law. He is the patron of the souls of young children and travellers, and he is peculiarly zealous that all creatures, living and inanimate, shall in due time complete their transformations with as little suffering and evil as possible, and eventually reach Paradise.



“KUAN YIN”



## CHINESE BUDDHISM OF TO-DAY

Below these saintly beings are various orders of guardian spirits, men, demons and ghosts in numerous categories, animals, plants, stocks and stones ; all part of the scheme of things, and none excluded from the hope of re-embodiment under better conditions through faith in Amitâbha, the intercession of the Bodhisattwa, or the 'gaining of merit.'

In such an imaginative and poetical system, it is not surprising to find the doctrine that mere intentions or vows have a certain creative power in themselves. This is good psychology, as far as it goes ; every elevated thought or good intention predisposes the mind to dwell on and recall that which is good and elevating. The abuse of the idea is in the lavish use of Dhârani—blessings or wonder-working texts, taken from the voluminous scriptures of Mahâyâna, for laying ghosts or quelling demons. In this respect, Buddhist and Taoist are largely at one ; and popular tales often show us the Buddhist monk and the Taoist adept fighting side by side against uncanny manifestations.

(The unity of life, and the possibility of re-embodiment and transformation in the widest sense of the word, are strong links between Mahâyâna and Taoism ; while the hierarchy of gods, demi-gods and lower grades, in endless variety—whether here or in the world to come—is quite in harmony with the classifying proclivities of the Chinese mind.)

A very few words will suffice for a subsequent off-shoot of Mahâyâna, which became deeply coloured with a certain late type of Hinduism, and under the name of Tantric, or magical Buddhism, has obtained a firm foothold in Tibet and Mongolia. While there are undoubted traces of it in certain parts of China, it seems to have made little headway, and not in an aggravated form ; so an examination of it is fortunately unnecessary for our purpose.

From India proper, Buddhism has practically disappeared; and in China and the Extreme East it owes its survival, in the form of Mahâyâna, largely to its power of suiting itself to any system that comes in its way. It is notable, however, that the vast Buddhist literature of China is no longer read to any extent by the educated classes, and that Buddhism and Taoism alike have steadily lost prestige for some centuries past.

To be quite fair to Mahâyânist Buddhism, a brief tribute must be paid to its effects upon Chinese art.

The remarkable sculptures of Gandhara and the adjoining parts of India and Central Asia in the early centuries A.D. set before the Chinese artist models of great spiritual and physical beauty; and the refined treatment of these, the subdued hieratic dignity of the pictures and statues of this period—when Buddhism was at its missionary stage in China—has been justly compared to the products of the schools of Umbria and Florence before the Renaissance.

In composition as well as in subject, in the use of restrained colour, in the elimination of needless detail and the wise disposition of 'empty space,' we see a delicacy and vigour in the Chinese handling of landscape, birds and flowers which undoubtedly owe much to Buddhist thought and feeling. A doctrine of 'emptiness' expresses itself admirably in faintly sketched mountain-forms, fading into a misty, limitless sky; in the water-fall leaping down a lonesome precipice to lose itself in a cloudy hollow; in the sense of solitude and helplessness in one who is bid to realise that the mighty crag, the impetuous flooded river are, after all, 'the baseless fabric of a vision.'

As a counterpoise to the gloomy dignity of its landscape art, Buddhism gave an impulse to the delineators not only of the truly Chinese demons and monsters, but of the various orders of avenging

spirits and spectres in the 'purgatorial' stages of existence. Horror was thus added to an already rich and gruesome folk-lore.

One of the often-repeated statements to the detriment of Chinese Buddhism is that the sacred books brought from India were merely transcribed into Chinese characters, so as to imitate the sound of the Sanskrit or other originals without any relation to their meaning.

This is as untrue and unjust as most of the general statements current about China.

The Chinese Tripitaka or Three Receptacles—literally 'Baskets'—of Buddhist Scriptures are the Sûtra, or Homiletic Legends; the Vinâya or Disciplinary Regulations; and the Abhidharma or Philosophical Commentaries. The total comprises 6771 volumes, of unequal length and merit.

Certain of the texts are great favourites with the Chinese as blessings, charms and formulae of exorcism; and it is noticeable that at times a phrase—or sometimes a whole sentence—is left untranslated, and is therefore recited, more or less accurately, in the original Sanskrit.

But, with unimportant exceptions, the whole mass of the Tripitaka has been translated into real Chinese from another language or—in the case of a few of the later books—written in Chinese from Indian sources. A European student of the Chinese language who is ignorant of Sanskrit can make out the translated books of the Tripitaka provided he knows that certain abstract terms must be given a slightly different meaning in a Buddhist book to that which they have in ordinary secular literature.

The same thing is, of course, true of such expressions as 'grace,' 'absolution,' 'mortification,' 'unction,' 'confirmation,' and so forth, in Christian books of theology.



## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

A reliable authority, himself a Buddhist, told the writer that, if anything, the early Chinese translators were rather too literal; that their over-anxiety to reproduce exactly the idea expressed in the foreign original 'cramped their style' in writing Chinese.

At the present day, only too many Buddhist monks in China make no pretence of studying the difficult and tedious books of their cult. They repeat over and over again burial services and short extracts ('*dhâraṇi*') for magical purposes, and are often unable to tell their meaning; and when we find, in popular tales, that the mere presence of a Buddhist book, or a scrap of paper with a Buddhist sentence written on it, is considered an efficacious safeguard against demons, the temptation to an ignorant man to earn his fee with as little trouble as possible will be readily understood.

The old witch-burning Puritans of New England did not hesitate to use their Bibles for the purpose of divination, and frequently placed the Bible under their pillows or by their bedsides to ward off evil influences. The Arab quack will write some verses of the Qurân on parchment, soak the document in water, and administer the decoction to his patient; and an Italian doctor attached to an Embassy in Morocco once had to stop a patient from putting a prescription into his mouth and chewing it, and tell him to take it to a druggist.

One or two tales of reincarnation may be quoted here.

A book of the eighth century A.D. tells how Ku Huang lost his only son at the age of seventeen. The boy's soul hovered about in an uncertain state without leaving the house. Ku gave way to bitter sorrow, and wrote a verse in which he lamented that he was seventy years old, and would soon have to

enter the grave also. The boy's soul, hearing his father recite the verse he had written, was suddenly heard to say, in a human voice, 'I will again become a son in the Ku family.' Presently the soul felt that it was being seized and sent before an Official of the Underworld, who ordered it to be reborn as a child in the Ku household. Then the soul became insensible and after a little while, opening its eyes, it recognised its home and relations, but remembered no details of its former life as a son of Ku. When the reincarnated son was seven years old, however, an elder brother jokingly gave him a slap, so he retorted, 'I am *your* elder brother, why do you beat me?' The whole family were amazed; whereupon he told them the complete history, without any mistake, of his former seventeen years of life as a son of the family.

Another curious old story concerns a house-boy (servant) in the family of Sun Mien, the Governor of a district. Up to the age of six he was unable to utter an intelligible word; but one day, when the mother of his employer descended the steps of the house and sat down, the boy suddenly looked very attentively at her. She was surprised, and asked the child what was the matter, so he smiled, and told her;—'Mistress, when you were a little girl, you wore a yellow petticoat and a red and white robe, and you kept a wild fox. Do you remember?' The old lady said yes, she did. 'That fox,' continued the boy, 'was my body. I escaped and hid in a brick drain. When you called and cried out for me I stole away and made my lair in an old grave. After living there two years a hunter caught me, and beat me to death. On my appearing before Yama the Judge of the Dead, he said, "you are sinless; take a human body." I was reborn the son of a beggar, and after enduring much misery and privation, I died at the age of twenty.

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

Again I appeared before Yama, who said, "Your next birth will be as a domestic slave in the house of a man of rank ; it does not sound very nice, but you will have neither sorrow nor care." Thus I came here. You, Madame, are in your first existence, but this is my third. I feel no sorrow and I am very happy. Is it not strange ?'

On the subject of slavery, it should be noted that in times of famine young children are often sold into what is really servitude, and become attached as domestic servants at very young ages to the homes of people of means. The girls are usually portioned and married by their employers to suitable youths when they reach the appropriate age, or become secondary wives, in the Old Testament fashion, to some man who has no heir by his chief wife ; the boys rise to positions rather like those of a butler or house-steward in Western countries. Europeans who have lived long in China assert that these domestic slaves have no well-defined legal rights, but are generally well treated, and are regarded much the same as ordinary members of the family.

The kidnappers who steal children and sell them are punished by immediate decapitation if they are caught.

Sometimes a child who is a reincarnation of someone else does not ' receive a superior soul ' for quite a long time after birth.

There was once an official named Chêng Ch'ün, whose daughter, of whom he was very fond, had many illnesses in her childhood and youth. So Chêng consulted a certain Wang, a man well versed in magic, and Wang declared that the girl was not ill, but that her superior soul had not yet settled in her body. Chêng asked for more details. Wang then said, ' So-and-so, prefect of So-and-so, is the person

of whom your daughter is the reincarnation. That man was due to die several years ago, but he does so much good in this life that the deities of the other world have granted him special length of days. He is now over ninety ; when he dies, your daughter will enjoy perfect health.' Chêng made enquiries and verified Wang's statements. About a month later, Chêng's daughter had a feeling like one passing from a state of inebriety to full consciousness, and it was found that the aged prefect had died on the very day upon which she entered upon her full mental life.

A certain Liu, after having served as prefect in a district of Shan Si Province, was transferred to Kiang Nan. While passing the night in a town in Kiang Su, he felt himself lifted up in the air and carried back by a gentle breeze to Shan Si. During his flight, a hideous and evil Kuei attacked him. He defended himself, defeated the Kuei, and held it under his arm. While he was wondering what to do next, a former neighbour called Yu appeared to him and said, 'Take the demon to the temple of Kuan Yin to be tried ; if it gets away, it will try to do you some mischief.' Liu thereupon flew to the temple of Kuan Yin, and entered with his prisoner. The statues of the guardian genii of the temple looked very fiercely at the Kuei, and when Kuan Yin saw it she said, 'This Kuei has broken prison and escaped from the Underworld. It must be taken back.' So she ordered an inferior spirit to escort the prisoner, but the spirit made an excuse. Then Kuan Yin, smiling at Liu, said to him, 'As you have caught the Kuei, you must take it back to the Underworld.' 'But I am a living man,' said Liu, 'How can I go down into the Underworld ?' 'Quite easily,' said Kuan Yin. Then she breathed three times in his face and took leave of him. 'But I do not know the way,' said Liu. At that moment Yu

appeared again, and showed him the mouth of a dark, narrow well. The Kuei leaped into it, and Liu followed. He felt very cold, and from time to time his fall slackened; each time, a gust of warm air from above set him going again.

At last he entered a place of light, and reached the roof of a palace. 'Who is that man who has fallen on the roof?' cried a voice from within the building. Immediately some guards in golden armour helped him and the Kuei down from the roof, and presented them to a venerable, bearded man in royal robes.

Liu was questioned, and said he was sent by Kuan Yin to deliver the Kuei to justice. The Kuei was speedily examined, sentenced and punished.

Liu thought it would be a good opportunity, while in the Underworld, to make some enquiries about his past and his future, so he questioned one of the attendant spirits. The attendant told Liu that in his previous incarnation he had been carried off by brigands as a child of nine, and had died miserably at an early age. The rest of his faults were not yet expiated and he was to become blind in his old age during this present life. Suddenly the attendant's narrative was interrupted by an order to return Liu to the upper world; the kingly figure thereupon blew three times on Liu's back, and he rose through the well by which he had gone down. On his return to earth, he went to the temple of Kuan Yin, and as soon as he entered he saw an exact copy of himself, standing near the goddess. Kuan Yin explained to Liu that his superior soul was a bad one, so she had taken it out and would give him a better one instead. Liu thanked her, and bowed to his superior soul, but the latter did not return his salute. Thereupon Kuan Yin took a pin from her hair, and made an incision in Liu's left side; and as she worked with the pin, the 'double' gradually got smaller, and at last dis-

appeared. At that moment, Liu suddenly awoke in his bed, and found a red scar on his left side. Later on, he heard that his friend Yu had died on the night of his dream.

The efficacy of good works is emphasised in the annexed tale, which is otherwise totally out of harmony with Buddhist ideas.

One day in Spring, a Mr. Lu, out for a walk, saw a friend who had been many years dead. The friend showed him an official warrant and said, 'I am an Officer of the Tribunal of the Spirit of T'ai Shan, the sacred mountain. I am on my rounds, and I have seventy-two men to summon. You are among the number, but you are an old friend, and I do not want to hurry you. About a month hence I will call for you on my return journey. You can make your arrangements in the meantime.' Then the ghost vanished. Lu sent for his son, explained that he had not long to live, and charged his son to complete three good works which Lu would not have time to carry out. A certain public road had to be repaired; So-and-so's funeral to be held; So-and-so's marriage to be arranged. 'Here's the necessary money,' he added, giving his son the cash, 'And no time is to be lost.' Lu got his coffin ready and waited for the summons. It did not come. On the last night of the year his old friend's ghost came to him in a dream and said, 'The order for your arrest has been cancelled. For the three good works you have done, twenty additional years of life have been allotted to you.' And Lu did not die until twenty more years went by.

One afternoon, the Assessor Shên of Hu Chou Fu was taking his siesta in his study when a minor official of the Underworld appeared to him, and led him through a tree-shaded court to a large mirror set upon

a pedestal. The spirit said to him, 'See what you were in your last incarnation.' Shên looked in the mirror, and beheld a personage in a square cap and red shoes, dressed as a man of letters of the Ming Period. 'Look again,' said the spirit, 'and see what you were in your earlier incarnation.' Shên then saw a superior officer of the Ming times, in black hat, red robe, jade-buckled girdle and black boots. Then a servant came and prostrated himself before Shên, saying, 'Do you know me? I was your servant at Ta T'ung Fu, two hundred years ago,' and handed Shên a document. 'What is this?' said Shên. 'During the Chia Ching period (between 1522 and 1566) you were called Wang Siu, and were military governor at Ta T'ung Fu in Shan Si. You have been summoned to answer an enquiry into your doings on a complaint laid by five hundred Kuei before the Judge of the Underworld, Wên Hsing Wang. You are accused of causing their death, although I remember that they were executed in spite of your instructions. General So-and-so had them slain, as they were rebels who had surrendered but had broken out again in rebellion. General So-and-so wished to make an example by putting them to death, and you wrote to dissuade him from his purpose. This letter will secure your acquittal.'

While the man was explaining, Shên's memory of those far-off times gradually revived, and he thanked his old servant. 'Will you continue your journey on foot or in a sedan?' said the summoning spirit. 'Do high officials tramp on foot?' cried the servant. Thereupon two bearers and a handsome sedan appeared, and Shên was carried several *li* until they came to a palace.

In the great hall sat a venerable, white-bearded man in royal robes; and an usher in a black cap and violet gown, holding a book in his hands, summoned the military governor Wang Siu.

‘Call General So-and-so ! It is an affair in which he is implicated,’ said Wên.

The General was called by the usher, and a tall man in armour came from an adjoining room and advanced into the hall. The Judge cross-examined him at considerable length, and then Wang Siu was called again.

Shên came forward, saluted with his hand, and stood erect. ‘The General has confessed,’ said the Judge, ‘that he had the five hundred rebels executed. You claim to be innocent because you wrote to the General dissuading him from killing those men ; but under the laws of the Ming Dynasty you had sufficient authority to forbid him. You were too weak, to say the least of it.’ Shên admitted that this was so.

Then the General again took up his case. ‘It was absolutely necessary,’ he said, ‘to kill those men. They had surrendered and then broken their word. If I had pardoned them they would have raised a fresh rebellion. I had full power as a General to execute them, and I did it in the public interest, and not on personal grounds.’

At that moment a whirling cloud, black as ink, arose before the Tribunal, accompanied by whistling noises (the sound made by Prêta or hungry, suffering ghosts) and an unbearable stench of blood. Then there rolled into the hall five hundred skulls, which gnashed their teeth and tried to bite the General ; and after them came five hundred headless skeletons. Shên was terrified. The Judge knocked on his table and cried, ‘Wretches ! Were you not executed for rebelling again after you had surrendered ?’ ‘That is true,’ cried the Kuei. ‘Then the General acted justly in putting you to death,’ said the Judge. ‘He did it to win the Emperor’s favour and get promotion,’ said the Kuei, ‘not for the good of the people.’ ‘Not



for your good, perhaps,' said the Judge ironically, 'but undoubtedly for the good of the country at large. However, it occurred two hundred years ago, and it does not come within my province to undo it. The matter must be referred to the Supreme Tribunal of Heaven, and in the meantime I pass the following sentences; the ex-general So-and-So, being under suspicion as to his conduct, will not for the present be raised to the rank of a Shên (good spirit); you Kuei, as you still harbour resentment, will not be reborn as human beings; and as a punishment for his weakness, Wang Siu will be reborn a girl in his next life.' The Kuei, each carrying its severed skull, prostrated themselves, saying, 'It shall be as you order.'

The Judge then sent Shên away, escorted by the spirit, and together they passed through the shaded court to the mirror and met the old servant, who congratulated Shên on his acquittal.

'Look in the mirror,' said the spirit, 'and see what you are in this present life,' and Shên saw himself as an assessor of the Manchu Dynasty. 'And now see what you are going to be,' added the spirit. But at this moment Shên woke up, perspiring with horror. He was lying in his study, his family weeping around him. They told him he had been unconscious a day and a night, and only the place around his heart was warm. Now Shên had seen hanging in the Hall of Judgment a number of written scrolls. He could only remember the following :

'The Tribunal of the other world is no respecter of persons.'

'Everything is counted on the calculating-board of Heaven.'

'When the waters fall, the rocks appear; thus every fault is revealed in its due time.'

Another story of retributive justice tells how, in 1746, the home of one Su Ch'ia was haunted by a black spectre, which whistled about the house and was the cause of numerous fires. Even the neighbours were disturbed, and asked for help from Liu Han Chang, the sub-prefect of the district, who was a celebrated man of letters and a native of another province. (As a rule, officials are not set to govern their own kith and kin, but are appointed to distant posts in order to prevent favouritism.)

Liu made the usual offerings and prayers, but in vain ; so he got his Secretaries to prepare an eloquent petition to the Guardian Spirit of the City. Accordingly he bathed, fasted, and went in procession one evening to the Temple of the Guardian Spirit, and burned his petition, with the proper ritual, on a dish before the altar ; then he retired to rest in a room adjoining, in the hope that the Guardian would appear to him in a dream and reveal an answer to his petition.

No dream came, but the next morning the ashes of the burnt petition had traced in them the words Ch'u, the name of a place, and T'ao, a surname. Liu thought things over for a while, and then went to Su Ch'ia and asked him, without preamble, 'Have you ever injured anyone of the name of T'ao, of the town of Ch'u ?' Su Ch'ia flushed, and made the following confession :

'During my youth, on a journey to see a relative at Wu Ch'ang Fu, I fell ill, and the people I was travelling with left me to shift for myself. I should undoubtedly have died miserably had not a beggar named T'ao taken pity on me. He nursed me, shared with me what he begged, and with the aid of other beggars saved my life, and helped me on my way home. I married, lived in poverty, had a son, and quite forgot all about the beggar.

One day he turned up unexpectedly, bringing with him a very large, heavy sack. 'Twenty years have

gone by,' said he, 'since the time when I saved your life. All these years I have been a brigand in the woods and on the waters. This is my loot. The police are after me, and I have come to ask you to hide me and my swag.' I was puzzled, and talked the matter over with my son, who naturally was afraid to be mixed up with an affair of this kind. We hid the booty, and were just making arrangements for the escape of the brigand when the police unexpectedly raided my house and captured him. My son and I were dumbfounded, but my daughter-in-law cried, joyfully, 'I knew you two dolts would not give that worthy up to justice, so I informed the police. Now we are not compromised in any way, and can keep the loot into the bargain. From what you tell me, I understand that the ghost of the beggar T'ao is taking its revenge upon me.'

'I think you are right,' said the sub-prefect. 'T'ao was a brigand, and deserved the death penalty, but you made your fortune out of the stolen goods, and they will bring you no luck. I am afraid nothing can be done.'

And so it proved. Su Ch'ia's son and daughter-in-law died, and all his property was, by degrees, destroyed by fire, so that he was completely ruined. Then the manifestations ceased; the beggar T'ao had had his revenge.

Ill-gotten goods profit nobody.

A ghost sometimes does a good turn to a living man, in exchange for a service of approximately equal importance. Buddhism is very 'commercial' in matters of this kind.

A Mr. Chang lived in the eastern suburb of Shao Hsing Fu, Che Kiang. His wife was ill, and he went to fetch a doctor. As he passed a place called Niao Mên Shan, he fell in with an old white-bearded man

who was going the same way. It was getting dark, but Chang remarked that the old man's feet did not tread firmly on the ground, but only touched it lightly, and that his body threw no shadow. Mr. Chang came to the conclusion that he must be a Kuei, so he asked, 'Who are you?' The old man replied: 'I am not a man but a Kuei. Do not be afraid; I am going to ask you a favour, not to injure you in any way. My body is buried near Niao Mên Shan, on the western side of the hill, on a rock beside the water. The quarrymen are removing stones from there, and in a little while my coffin is sure to fall into the river. I beg you to have it removed and reburied elsewhere. Promise me this, and I will save your life. You will shortly cross the Hsin Ch'iao (new bridge), and nearby are lurking five souls of drowned suicides, looking out for substitutes. I will conduct you safely past them.' 'All right,' said Chang, 'I give you my promise.' Then the Kuei produced a packet of cakes bearing on the wrapper the name and address of a pastry cook named Chu, and said to Chang, 'ask this man who I am.'

When they came to the bridge, Chang saw five shadows barring the way, but the Kuei took the branch of a tree and belaboured the five spectres with it until they fled, whistling, and jumped into the water. Chang crossed the bridge safely, and when he reached the doctor's door the Kuei vanished.

Next day Chang found Chu the pastry cook, and told him of his adventure. Chu was astonished and said, 'But that was my relative, Mo Tsüan Chang! Why did he not ask me to remove his coffin? Evidently destiny put him in your way, in order to save you from the five Prêta, so you are the man to see to it. One good turn deserves another.'

Chang found the grave, and the coffin was only a foot away from the water's edge; so he had it reburied in an auspicious place.

The importance attached by the Chinese—in spite of Buddhism—to fitting burial in a lucky spot is fairly well known, and is dealt with in Chapter XI. under the heading of Fêng Shui or Geomancy. Chang's service to the deceased Mo was evidently considered by the writer of this tale to be of sufficient 'merit' to save him from the clutches of the ghosts.

The next story describes a 'soul in purgatory,' asking for help through the mouth of a living person. The distinction between the individuality of the suffering soul on the one hand, and that of the person obsessed on the other, is of course, incompatible with real Buddhism.

At Huei Chou Fu, An Hwei, the residences of the sub-prefect and the garrison commander adjoined one another. Between them stood the Temple of the Local Guardian Spirit; the end wall of the temple formed one boundary of the military gentleman's courtyard, while the front of the temple gave on to the courtyard of the sub-prefecture. In the spring of 1775, the back wall of the temple suddenly fell, so that the temple communicated with the garrison commander's quarters.

The following night an old woman, a servant of the soldier, fell down as if in a fit. When she came to, it was noticed that her left foot was hurt, and she was speaking a northern dialect. 'I am hungry,' she cried. They gave her food, and she ate twice as much as an ordinary person. Then she said:—'I am Ha Shê (a Tartar name), secondary wife of the late sub-prefect. His chief wife ill-treated me, and I hanged myself on a peach tree. While I was dying, I wished to become an evil Kuei, so as to revenge myself. Alas, when I was dead the Guardian Spirit of the place told me I had deserved my misfortune on account of my past sins, and he confined me to the temple, where I suffered terribly from hunger. To-day the

wall, in falling, hurt my foot, but it enabled me to escape and enter into your body, so that now I can eat. Give me food, and I will not hurt you.'

From that time onward, the old woman slept by day and ate voraciously every night, enough for two ordinary people.

Nothing else was wrong with her, and very often she was able to tell her employer of things that she could not have known in the ordinary way.

Now the garrison commander had lost a daughter whom he loved dearly, and he used to carry her memorial tablet with him from one place to another. At Huei Chou Fu he kept it in a temple, where he made offerings to it at the usual dates, but the old servant was unaware of this. As she seemed to know so many secrets in her obsession, it occurred to the soldier to ask her for news of his daughter.

'You must give me time to make enquiries,' said the spirit which obsessed the servant. The next day she said to the soldier, 'Your daughter's soul is lodged in such-and-such a temple. She is quite well and has everything that is necessary. Only she says that the clothes you sent her in the spring were too small for her.'

He made enquiries, and found out that the paper clothes he had sent to the temple for his daughter had been spoilt in a shower of rain, and that the person charged to take them had bought some others, on chance, in a market town.

Presently the temple wall was repaired; and the soul, speaking through the old servant, said, 'I am going to be imprisoned afresh, perhaps for many years. Be so charitable as to burn some paper money for me, now and again, that I may tip my warders.' They did so at once, so the soul thanked them and said, 'Give me a lute; I will sing and play to you before I go away.' She played the lute, sang a song, and said not a word more.

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The old woman recovered her usual manner and speech, and from that time onwards slept by night and ate normally by day. The soul had left her, and never troubled her again.

A curious example of re-incarnation is cited in a tale of the wonder-loving T'ang Period.

In Ch'ing Nan lived a rich man called Ts'ui Tao. The other members of his family were very poor, but he had a plantation of over a thousand orange trees, which bore extremely well. One day one of these trees changed into a man, who asked to see Ts'ui. 'In my prior existence,' said the tree-man, 'I owed you a million cash; I died in your debt, and my family swindled you of your money. You informed Heaven of the matter, and I and my family were all turned into orange trees so as to serve you and pay off the debt. But now the Supreme Ruler of the Universe has decided that compassion be shown to my clan; we are to become human again, and I am to pass through a second sojourn in the world, with full consciousness of the past. I shall be grateful and happy if you will build me a little cottage, that I may finish my life as a tiller of the soil. And then, Sir, fell all your orange trees, leaving not one standing; live a good life, and no harm will come to you.'

The plantation owner then cut down the orange trees, built the reincarnated man a hut, and died, quite poor, five years later. The reincarnated man went away, no one knew whither. (*Hsiao Hsiang Luh.*)

The Greek legend of Circe's lovers who had turned into pigs may be compared to the Buddhist belief that lazy people are sometimes reborn as pigs and sometimes as dugong, a heavy walrus-like animal mostly hunted for its oil.

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The Tung Wei Chi (Sung Period, c. 1000 A.D.) mentions a Buddhist monk who has been on a long begging tour into North China. When about to return to the Capital, an old monk attached to the monastery where he was staying gave him a letter addressed to Puh-Lo, at a place north of the walls of the Capital City. The monk was very curious about the letter, and surreptitiously opened and read it. It said :—‘ When you have done your work for the salvation of the brethren, come here and live quietly, for if you should be compelled to stop where you are it is to be feared that you may become worldly.’ He reclosed the letter, and on reaching the Capital he enquired for Puh-Lo, but in vain.

A few days later, he noticed a herd-boy by the river, driving a large hog which he addressed as Puh-Lo. The boy explained that it was the property of a butcher called Chao, and that it led the herd and kept them in order. It was very fond of eating the puh-lo plant, so they called it Puh-Lo. The monk thereupon addressed the hog by name, and threw the letter to it. The animal ate the letter, stood on its hind legs like a man, and died.

Of the dugong, people say that it is the transformation of a woman who has been lazy in doing her household duties while in this life. The oil obtained from the animal’s body, they imagine, gives light enough for music or chess-playing, but not sufficient for spinning.

This automatic way of assuming that ‘ the punishment fits the crime,’ has been held by certain observers of Buddhism to account for the apparent callousness of many Chinese and other Eastern Asiatics in the presence of suffering. Certainly, from what European doctors and missionaries tell us, the Chinese bear pain and illness very well ; they heal quickly, and they



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manage to be cheerful under conditions which no other race would find endurable. Probably this stoicism in the face of what cannot be helped is enhanced by Buddhism; probably, too, the age-old poverty of millions of peasants, existing on the verge of want and unaccustomed to anything else, has weeded out everyone who is not a born philosopher. In any event, a person unused to the appalling penury of China finds it difficult to understand how the people contrive to be so contented; and one can hardly expect the Chinese to be particularly sensitive to other people's troubles when they are evidently so insensible to their own.

The anomaly of the position is the definiteness of so many Buddhist writings in condemning the taking of life in any form. The cruelty of negligence or indifference, the ready assumption that suffering is the exact and just result of evil 'Karma,' seems almost as bad to us as the infliction of positive injury; to the Buddhist mind, however, there is evidently a world of difference between the two.

A tale illustrating the Buddhist horror of hunting animals is often printed with a popular Taoist work of piety, the well-known *T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien*.

A very reverend and much respected old gentleman had three frivolous sons, who were passionately fond of hunting.

One day, as they and their friends set off, fully equipped, on an expedition to the hills after game, an old man in a white robe unexpectedly appeared. He knelt down before them, and respectfully remonstrated with them for killing harmless creatures and exciting their own wild passions in the pursuit of their cruel sport. He particularly warned them not to incur the vengeance of Heaven by recklessly firing the woods in order to 'ring' their game; and as he

had seven young children, whom he had not time to remove out of danger, he begged them to have pity on him and his offspring.

Some of the party thought he must be a spirit—possibly the spectre of an animal which had lived in the hills. They followed, therefore, and saw him enter a cave. They blocked up the cave with brushwood and set fire to it. Suddenly a white stag rushed out, made for an adjoining rock, and turned into an old man, who upbraided them, crying, ‘You have killed my seven young daughters. A great calamity will come upon your house.’ They at once shot at him, but he caught the arrows in his hands, broke them, and vanished.

A little while later a soothsayer came to their house, and prophesied great fame and fortune for them in the future. Encouraged by this, they raised a rebellion against the reigning house; but someone betrayed them, and the majority of their clan were put to death for treason. The soothsayer and the man who revealed their secret were never identified; but it was generally believed that they must have been one and the same person—no other than the mountain spirit who had tried to protect the hunted animals.

A ninth-century collection of stories tells how Wu T’ang, a native of the extreme West of China, was passionately addicted to hunting.

One day in spring, he and his son came across a doe playing with her fawn. The doe smelt the hunters, and tried to make her fawn run off with her; but the poor creature ran the wrong way, and Wu shot it with his cross-bow. He left the body in the open, and hid in the bushes, knowing that the doe would return to its fawn; and presently he saw her come and lick the dead body of the fawn, crying piteously, and lying down beside it. Just as Wu was letting fly a fresh bolt

from his cross-bow, his son emerged from another hiding place, directly in the line of fire. The bolt flew, and entered the body of his son. He threw away his cross-bow and hurried to embrace the boy, while a voice from the forest addressed him: 'Wu, do you not think the doe loved its fawn also?' While Wu, in fear, looked about him, a tiger came rushing out of the thicket and bit off his arm. Wu dragged himself home, and died the same night.

The various Buddhas are often depicted riding upon animals, such as lions or elephants; but in certain parts of China it is believed that they also use a sort of spectral wolf as a mount. These wolves are re-impersonated vampires, or corpse-spectres which the Buddhas use as beasts of burden in order to keep them under control.

One night, says the *Tzū Puh Yü*, a man who was out for a walk saw a coffin open and the corpse walk out. As he thought it must be a vampire, he filled the coffin with stones and broken pottery, and went into the garret of an adjoining farmhouse to see what happened.

About one o'clock in the morning the corpse returned, apparently carrying something in its arms, and found the coffin full. It looked around angrily, its eyes flashing light, and saw someone in the garret of the farm. It rushed into the farmhouse, but as its legs were stiff it could not climb the ladder into the garret, and angrily threw it aside. The watcher, seeing his ladder gone, slid down by a tree and ran off, the vampire after him. Luckily he could swim, and in the hope that the vampire would be unable to cross running water (as is also believed in Europe), he crossed a stream, and watched the vampire storming and shrieking on the opposite bank. At length it leaped thrice into the air, turned into a beast, and galloped

off. It left behind it on the ground the corpse of a baby, half gnawed away, and sucked quite dry.

Some say, adds the narrator of this gruesome story, that corpses, at their first transformation, become devils of drought, and that in the next change they turn into wolves. These corpse-wolves possess spiritual intelligence, belch forth smoke and fire, and can fight dragons, hence the Buddhas ride them in order to keep them in subjection.

The fear of these monsters as demons of drought—the cause of famine, pestilence and widespread ruin—is more real to the Chinese than even their uncanny appearance or ghoulish habits. Another type of drought-demon, supposed to be formed of vapours which are sucked up from the shrinking water-courses and transformed into powerful devils, can even devour dragons. No one can conquer them; when it is Heaven's Will that a drought is to be, they materialise, and a shortage of rain follows.

As we have seen, (there is nothing in Buddhism to contradict these horrible fancies. Anything can turn into anything else, and every evil is merely the mechanical result of some other evil.)

(The transformation of men into animals and its converse, and the Chinese beliefs on the subject of vampirism,) will be illustrated by some weird tales in subsequent chapters of this book.

A Prêta or famished ghost once played an uncanny trick on the good people of Wu Ch'êng Hsien, province of Che Kiang.

There was formerly a temple in the district dedicated to the 'Brave and Valiant Chief.' This Chief was a young fellow who headed a rebellion against the Yüan or Mongol Dynasty, just before the Mings superseded them (fourteenth century A.D.). He was unsuccessful, and was captured and put to death, so

his friends and neighbours erected a temple in his honour.

In 1777 a citizen of Wu Ch'êng Hsien, named Ch'ên, who visited the temple to burn incense, came out of the building obsessed by some alien personality, and hanged himself nearby. His elder brother was very angry, and said people had no right to build temples to devils; they should be erected only in honour of good spirits (Shên). Being a brave man, he went to the temple to have it out with the custodian, and learned, to his horror, that the same thing had happened during the year to two other men, who had gone there to pay their respects to the spirit of the 'Brave and Valiant Chief.' The bereaved brother therefore hired some workmen, with picks, and lost no time in smashing the statue to atoms.

Some of the neighbours were terrified at his rashness, and the magistrate, when he got to hear of it, summoned him. Ch'ên's brother was quite frank about his motive for acting as he had done; he said the Valiant Prince was not mentioned in history, nor even in the local annals; he was just an interloping devil who had no right to any temple at all. 'Put up instead,' said the accused, 'a statue of Kuan Ti. That will be a benefit to the district. I am quite willing to pay for it.' The magistrate praised him highly, and his suggestion was acted upon.

Two months later, a strange spirit obsessed the daughter of a Mr. Sun, who was just of marriageable age. 'I am the Brave and Valiant Chief,' cried the girl. 'A wicked man has broken my statue, and I am compelled to wander about. Give me wine and food.' The fits were repeated, and Mr. Sun went and told the brother of the late Ch'ên about it. 'Leave it to me,' said he. Arming himself with a branch of peachwood, he went straight to Sun's house and entered, calling out as he did so, in a loud voice:—

'I broke your image! I turned you adrift! If you have anything to say, you miserable beggar and sponger, say it to me, and leave this girl in peace! You ought to be called a Valiant Chief, I am sure, when you behave so disgracefully! Blush, if you can, but clear out, and be quick about it!' 'Oh, it's that wretch again!' yelled the spirit through the mouth of the girl, 'I am going! I am going!'

As a precaution against the evil spirit's return, Sun persuaded Ch'ên's brother to stay at his house; and while he was there, the girl was free from attack. Whenever he went away, however, the obsession was renewed. The brother then advised her father to get her married as soon as possible; Sun followed his advice, and the attacks ceased.

(The girl was evidently hysterical, and therefore liable to these fits of obsession, as are so many Western 'mediums.' Marriage is, of course, a frequent cure of hysteria. The deceiving spirit is of a type we shall hear more about when we come to compare Chinese and Western spiritualism in a later chapter.)

A welcome and all-too-rare touch of romance distinguishes the following Buddhist tale.

In a village of Kiang Su, there lived the student Ch'iang I-Liu and his wife P'êng. They had been married when they were little more than children, and were passionately in love.

One night, Ch'iang dreamed that on a certain day he would pass his bachelor's examination; and the same night his wife dreamed that she was to die on the day her husband took his degree.

When the day of his examination came round, the boy was afraid to sit, for fear of losing his wife; but the girl persuaded him to present himself. 'It is very important for you to pass,' said she; 'my death

would not matter much. Besides, a good many dreams do not come true.'

Much against his will, the boy attended the examination, and the pass-list came out on the day revealed in his dream. The following morning, while at the Prefecture, the news was brought to him that his wife had died suddenly. He was unable to return home until a fortnight after his wife's death, as meetings and receptions connected with the taking of his degree detained him in the Prefectural City where the examinations were held.

In that district, the popular belief was that the souls of the departed were allowed to return on the fourteenth night after death; so poor young Ch'iang sat up beside his wife's coffin, in the hope of seeing her once more. About midnight, he heard a very slight rustling in the corner of the room. His wife appeared, and blew out the lamp which burned before the coffin. Ch'iang did not move, for fear of frightening her away; but she approached his bed, parted the curtains, and said, 'Have you come back?' They embraced, and began to question one another. 'Is it true,' said Ch'iang, 'that underlings of the spirit-world summon the souls of the dead, and escort them when they visit the earth?' 'That is true of the wicked,' replied the spirit of the girl. 'They are treated as captives. As I was not found to be wicked, and my time on earth had been cut short, I was allowed to visit you alone.'

'For to-night only?' asked Ch'iang. 'No, every night until the time comes to part the link between us. Besides, I have been promised to be your wife again in another life.'

At that moment, a gust of wind shook the window.

'Hold me tightly,' cried the girl. 'A Kuei is so light that the least breath of wind carries it away.' She remained with him until cock-crow, and came

again every night for two months. Then, with a sigh, she said farewell. 'Our union is at an end. But in seventeen years' time we shall be reunited.' And she vanished.

Now the graduate Ch'iang was handsome and accomplished, and his family and friends pestered him with match-making propositions. 'I will remarry,' said he, 'when you find my lost wife for me.' So they gave it up, and left him to his solitude.

In the seventeenth year after his bereavement, a junk, on its return voyage from Shan Tung, anchored by his village. On board were a Cantonese couple, with their daughter. The father was a scholar, but poor, and his brother had helped to bring up the daughter, and wanted to marry her to a very suitable man; but the girl obstinately refused, and said she was destined to be the wife of Ch'iang I-Liu of Kiang Su. So her relations had set sail with her to find her fated husband.

Ch'iang asked to meet the girl, and recognised her, the moment he saw her, as his lost wife. She had been born seventeen years before—the day following the night on which his wife's ghost had bade him farewell. They were married as soon as possible, and lived in the greatest happiness for seventeen more years. Then they both fell ill, and died on the same day.

Another pathetic little story, of the third century A.D., tells how a youth and a maiden loved each other dearly, and were betrothed. The boy was called up for military service, and was away for several years. The girl was thereupon promised in marriage to another man. She protested in vain, and was married to the other suitor out of hand; and in a little while, she died of grief.

On his return, the young man heard what had happened, and went to weep on her grave. Unable



to resist the desire to see her once more, he dug into the grave-mound and opened her coffin. Immediately the girl returned to life, and he carried her home. After a little while she was quite well and strong again.

The relatives of the 'widower' heard of this and lodged a complaint with the mandarin. He reserved judgment, and the case came before a higher court. The latter decided ;—'That a case in which perfect love and fidelity are strong enough to bring the dead to life cannot be judged by any ordinary standards. Let the girl be wedded to him who opened her coffin.'

We are a little prone to imagine that in Asia, and particularly in China, romance does not enter into the scheme of things. It must be confessed that, as a general rule, marriages are made with a view to the material interests of the family, rather than for the satisfaction of the young people. This is quite common, of course, in agricultural communities all over the world. Romance, therefore, where it does occur, is much admired.

The Chinese are never tired of repeating the story of a hero of remote antiquity who was urged by the Emperor to divorce the homely wife of his peasant days and to marry an heiress of distinguished family. 'No, Your Majesty,' said the old man, 'the companion of my porridge days,' (*i.e.*, of the time of my poverty and obscurity) 'shall never go down from my hall !'

There are, besides, a large number of poems in the Chinese language of which love is the topic ; and although the position of women leaves a good deal of room for improvement, and although the situations referred to are not always creditable from our point of view, the actual poems very rarely contain anything in bad taste.

Popular novels and dramas are not so inoffensive, as a rule ; but in comparison with similar works

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written in other parts of Asia, and even in some European countries, the light literature of China is not considered to be unduly coarse. Novelists and playwrights hardly rank as 'literary men' in China, and many dramas and stories are written anonymously; an author of standing would not devote himself to elaborate studies of human passion and sex-problems, and could never make a name for himself by so doing.

There are signs of change, however, to a more Western outlook. Serious literary work is being done by a new school of Chinese authors, who write in the 'colloquial' style for the magazines and newspapers, and translate European works, not into the erudite Chinese of the philosophers and historians, but into modern Pekingese or 'mandarin.' This dialect, as its name implies, is that of the Capital and surrounding Northern districts, but it is quickly spreading through the Western and Central Provinces; and there are reasons for hoping that it may help to unite and strengthen the Chinese nation.

The 'New School' do not draw a hard and fast line between light and instructive writing, and the status of novels and plays will tend to improve. Their productions will also discourage the reading of the already neglected scriptures of Buddha, and weaken what little hold Buddhism has upon the people of China.

The transformation of men into animals as an expiation of sin is thoroughly in accordance with Buddhist ideas, although a large number of the were-animal legends and beliefs, current in China, appear to be connected more directly with older sources of folk-lore. They correspond, in many important respects, to the Non-Buddhist beast-tales of other parts of Asia, and of Europe and Africa. To what extent Buddhism has contributed to them, or modified them, will appear in the next Chapter.

## V

### MEN AND ANIMALS

A tenth-century writer—the Taoist T'an Ch'iao—expresses his wonder at the instinctive wisdom of animals, and reminds his human readers that in their food, their habitat, their mating, and the nurture of their young, the beasts and birds all follow laws.

We are once more reminded that the Chinese regard all life as *one*, and are convinced that human souls are somewhat unstably attached to their bodies, so we are prepared for an extensive survival of were-animal tales.

The fables of Aesop, Reynard the Fox, Beauty and the Beast, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and many such stories will recur to one's mind. Not only have we—here in the West—beasts thinking and talking as clearly and wisely as men, but beautiful maidens wooed and won by animal lovers, and forming regular and honourable alliances with them.

Did not a wolf suckle Romulus and Remus?

Surnames and personal names of animal origin are widely prevalent. Such are the Norse names Ulf and Bjorn, (Wolf and Bear); the English surnames Bird, Fox, Wolf, Hogg, Lyon, Stagg, and many others; the Chinese surnames meaning Bear, Sheep, Dragon, Swallow, Pheasant; obvious examples to which might be added others from different countries.

European beast-heroes are generally described as being kept in durance under an animal form by an enemy wizard, and becoming human again when the

spell has been broken. This may either be a later variant of an old animistic legend, or a relic of the doctrine of transmigration of the same soul from a human to an animal body, in accordance with a very ancient tradition common to several peoples in Asia and Europe.

'Totemism' has undoubtedly been overworked by some folklorists, but traces of it are so widespread, and seem to account for so much that is otherwise meaningless, that we must stop and consider it for a few minutes. Peoples of comparatively low culture have been found in many lands to regard some animal as a sacred badge, and to refrain from eating it except under ritual restrictions, and as an act of religious significance. It becomes a war-cry, a tribal ensign, a clan-surname; it fixes the degrees of kinship, regulates the celebration of marriages among the living, and the wearing of mourning for the dead. Thus the male of the Crow clan can wed a maiden of the Snake clan; a girl of the Fox tribe can marry a warrior of the Wolf tribe. The next step, the reference to a consanguineous group by its totem-name, is a practice familiar to every boy-scout; and the only reason why totemism, in one form or another, is not accepted as an explanation of the extent and vitality of beast-tales, seems to be—that it is too simple and obvious!

The fact that these stories are not linked up with totemism by Chinese writers, is, of course, important; but China had surnames for individual families nearly a thousand years B.C., and clan or tribal designations earlier still, and a scientific examination of the origin of surnames is not to be expected of the credulous transcribers of folk-tales, nor of philosophers who unceasingly preach the transmutation of everything into something else. Chinese thinkers have always been singularly indifferent to physical science; the

welfare of the individual has never bulked so largely with them as the subordination of the claims of the one to the peaceful governance of the many.

Although the existing Chinese character for 'surname' contains the 'radical' or key-sign for 'woman,' pointing to the period when the mother transmitted name and property, surnames have depended upon the father, European fashion, as far back as they can be traced in Chinese history. Etymologies based on an analysis of the current characters for Chinese words—without regard to the earlier and more pictorial forms—are being more and more distrusted as unsafe in the light of the investigations of Mr. L. C. Hopkins and of several Chinese savants.

The earliest traditions mention birds and beasts as fighting in the Emperor's army, and describe Emperors who, partly covered with hair or feathers, gradually trained their subjects to cook food, build houses, and till the soil. A race so naïvely totemistic would be the last in the world to explain away the mysterious references in the revered written records of the foundation of that culture, whose age is a just cause of its national pride.

It has been noticed that more than a dozen of the non-Chinese peoples who dwell on the frontiers or in the semi-civilized parts of the country have names written with an animal 'radical' as a classifying symbol; and several races have names which are in ordinary use to designate quadrupeds. In China proper, as we have already noticed, a fair number of animal surnames are in common use, with the exception, it is stated, of 'wolf' and 'dog.'

The alternative to a theory of totemism is that of a pathological state in which people imagine they are animals, and in food, or otherwise, try to mimic them. This is altogether too technical a subject for the general reader; and the hypothesis of a world-wide

tradition, among diverse races and in all climates, of a morbid state which must always have been rare, appears to the writer to take more for granted and to be in far greater need of proof, than the confusion of religion, history, and something rather like heraldry which may fairly be looked for in stories tinged with totemism.

One must leave it to the reader to attribute whatever meaning he can read into animal stories to the cause that seems to him most likely ; and for any alternative suggestion to those hinted at in the foregoing passages, the writer will be sincerely grateful.

It is held by some authorities that a folk-tale is generally a deposed religious myth, one which has lost ground on account of improved culture—native or foreign—and which, therefore, survives among the more credulous only. To go back a stage further, the myth itself may very well have been based upon a ritual whose meaning is obscured by time or other causes, or upon an historical tradition.

On this understanding, the 'totem'—once of supreme social importance as a regulator of marriage and otherwise—would degenerate into a mere badge or tribe-name, as already suggested ; and the folk-tales based upon it, especially at contact with alien cultures, would tend to 'explain away' the unmeaning remnants of totemism in the higher race, by attributing animal ancestry, or a bestial name and nature, to its adherents among the lower.

A parallel from Western Europe may be helpful at this point.

The *Seal* plays a large part in the legendary lore of the West of Ireland and the Hebrides.

For many centuries, no one bearing the surname of Coneely would kill a seal, for fear of incurring bad luck ; the reason given being that, at a remote date in the past, certain Coneelys had been turned into seals

by enchantment. Coneely meant 'Seal,' and to avert the ill-omen the name is said to have been changed to Connolly.

When seals were caught in the Island of Harris, a seal was set apart to offer to the minister, doubtless as a precaution against misfortune. Formerly, no doubt, it would have been sacrificed to the gods. Tales of seals becoming human by merely shedding their fur are comparatively common in the Scottish Highlands.

In the district of Ossory, Ireland, the people were referred to in an old MS. as 'descendants of the wolf,' and there was a strong prejudice against killing wolves in that part of Ireland, so that these animals did not become extinct until the eighteenth century. Aubrey mentions that a wolf fang was worn as a charm 'as we do coral,' and—more significant still—the men of Ossory were mentioned in a folk-tale quoted in 1603, by Fynes Moryson, as having the power of 'turning into wolves yearly.' That is, they were *were-wolves*.

In Erris, a district of Connaught, foxes were formerly believed to understand human language; there was quite a friendly feeling towards the animal, whereas in another place—viz., Claddagh, Co. Galway—there was a fear of the fox, and a Claddagh fisherman would not put to sea on the day he saw a fox. The latter incident is attributed to the ancient belief that a totem animal should not be looked at by the tribe of which it was the heraldic or eponymous emblem.

The legendary hero, Cuchulain (whose name meant 'the dog of Culain'), was forbidden to eat the flesh of a dog; and it was after transgressing in this manner against his totem that his death occurred. Diarmid suffered from the same disability in respect of the boar, and when a certain boar died his life was forfeit.

The hare was not eaten in Wilts nor in certain parts of Scotland in former times, and it was held to be a bad omen if one met a hare. Other creatures were evidently totems in certain parts of the British Isles, but none of them fill so large a space in popular superstition as the seal, the wolf, or the fox.

One type of manifestation, familiar to readers of European folk-lore, has its parallel in Chinese 'Were-tigers,' and 'Were-wolves.' The following is a fairly representative example :

Ch'ên Tsung, a native of Tanyang, plied the trade of diviner near the capital city of the district. The governor of Ku-Shuh, adjoining, was a great tiger hunter. One day, two men in rough fur breeches offered the diviner ten coins and asked him, 'Must we go west to find something to eat, or would it be better to go eastward?' Tsung set out the divining stalks, and declared that the easterly direction was auspicious, but the westerly (which led to the dwelling of the tiger-hunting governor) unfavourable. The two men then asked for a drink, and put their mouths inside the cups like cattle ; then they set off towards the east, and a few hundred paces from the house one of the men and the horse he was riding turned into tigers. Subsequently the district became infested with unusually fierce tigers. (Period A.D. 405-419.) (*Sou Shên Hou Chi.*)

About A.D. 556, the wife of one Huang Chien, a Kuang Tung man, went into the mountains with his younger sister, Hsiao Chu (Little Pearl), to gather certain seeds. Passing a temple on the way, Hsiao Chu felt an irresistible impulse to enter. When the wife tried to get her home she fled into the hills, re-entered the temple, and hid there.

The girl's affianced husband, Li Hsiao, passed by with a friend some nights later, and as it began to rain the two men took shelter in the temple. They found



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a fire in one of the rooms, and gladly entered to dry their clothes. Suddenly they heard footsteps outside, and feeling rather uncomfortable, they hid behind a screen. A tiger bounded in towards the fire, took off its skin, rolled it up, and put on some garments which were lying ready by the fire. It was Hsiao Chu. Li recognised and spoke to her, but she would make no reply, so at daybreak she was conducted to the home of her married brother, Huang, and locked up in an outhouse. Raw meat was thrown to her, which she devoured without a word. A few days later, she again turned into a tiger, so the villagers shot arrows into the outhouse, and she was apparently killed. During the following year the district was so intimidated by the ravages of a tiger that the people had to keep their houses shut up even in the daytime, and the Prefect reported it to the Throne. (*Hu Wei.*)

Another were-tiger story relates how a man, attacked by tigers in the mountains, wounded one in the fore-paw with his axe. It ran away with its companions. Next day he told the villagers, mentioning that the tigers had talked to one another, and that the wounded one was addressed as Chu Tu-Shi. So they said, 'Oh yes! A man of this name lives to the east of our district; let us visit him and see if it is he.'

When they called he refused to see them, and explained that he was suffering from a wounded hand. So the villagers denounced Chu Tu-Shi to the Prefect as a were-tiger, and the Prefect sent some men to set fire to the house and kill the monster. But at their approach Chu Tu-Shi jumped out of bed, changed into a tiger, charged at the besiegers and escaped, no one knew whither. (*Kuang I Chi.*)

Similarly, in the folk-lore of Eastern Europe, were-wolves who had been wounded while in animal form

were said to have been identified later by the finding of similar wounds on their human bodies. Some of these tales were told as late as the sixteenth century, and as far west as in France. It is impossible to explain them satisfactorily, and very strange that in countries so far apart as France and China, the agreement in details should be so close. In one of the Chinese tales, a young official of the Chin Dynasty, A.D. 376, confessed that, during a severe illness, he had taken the form of a tiger and eaten several people; he may, of course, have attacked or bitten someone in delirium, or have imagined it. The tales of European lycanthropy may have arisen in the same way.

Here is a Chinese were-wolf story on quite European lines.

About A.D. 765, a certain old man, who had been ill for some months, refused to take any food for ten consecutive days; then, one evening, he disappeared. Some nights later, a villager who had been out gathering mulberry leaves was pursued by a he-wolf. He climbed a tree, but the wolf reared up against the tree and seized his coat in its teeth. The villager aimed a blow at it with his axe, and wounded it in the forehead. The wolf crouched down, but stayed at the foot of the tree so long that the villager did not dare to climb down until daylight. He tracked the wolf to the old man's house, went in, and told the old man's sons what had happened. The sons looked at the old man's forehead and saw a wound just where the wolf had been hit. For fear of his attacking any more people, they throttled him, seeing him turn into an old wolf before their eyes as he died. They confessed what they had done to the district magistrate and were acquitted. (*Hsüan Shih Chi.*)

This power of turning into a wolf at will was particularly attributed to the Mongol or Hunnish peoples

on the north and west of China—another example of the idea that foreigners were necessarily of a devilish disposition.

The *Hsüan Shih Chi* tells of Madame Han, the mother of a great general who was a native of N.W. China. The old lady was of Hunnish origin; a bold horsewoman, and a dead shot with bow and arrow. She hunted every kind of game with tireless energy, and was notorious for her vigour and ferocity for miles around.

When she passed her seventieth year, however, she began to feel her age. She retired to an inner room, sent off her body-servants, and allowed no one to approach her unannounced. She was also subject to violent fits of anger, and used to attack and thrash the members of her household. One night, after she had locked herself in as usual, there was heard a rasping noise. The inmates of the house rushed to the door to see what had happened, and saw a wolf open the door from the inside and leave the room. Before daybreak the wolf returned, entered the room, and locked the door.

The matter was reported to the General, her son, who made it his business, the next night, to watch her through a crevice. He found that the report was true. Next morning, feeling very uncomfortable, he was sent for by his mother, who asked him to provide her with a roe. He had it cooked and offered it to his mother, but she refused it, and said she wanted it raw. A raw roe was then given her, and she fell upon it and devoured it quickly in her son's presence. Some of the family began talking about this, and one day she overheard them, and seemed much ashamed; whereupon that very night, after she had locked her door, and while a crowd of frightened servants were watching outside it, a wolf burst out of her chamber and ran off. Madame Han was never seen again.

The Local History of Southern Shan Si describes a severe famine during the Ming Period, of which tales of cannibalism were told.

A certain herdsman used to go out, and return every evening at dusk. His wife asked him how he got anything to eat during the day, so he told her he ate men. 'To-morrow,' he said, 'I shall eat you. A little while ago I passed the temple of a local tutelary spirit, and noticed a wolf-skin there. I placed myself on it, and fell into a deep sleep. When I woke up I was a wolf, and without being aware that I was changed in any way, I killed a man and ate him. In the evening I returned to the temple, the skin dropped off, and I was a man again. Each time the change took place, I was in a sort of bewildered state; to-morrow at noon it will be your turn to be eaten. I am afraid it is my fate to do these things, but I do not want to hurt you. Make a straw image of yourself to-morrow, and stuff it with the intestines of a pig. You will then be safe.'

Having said this, he left her.

Next day, his wife and the other village women talked the affair over with her brother, and they decided to make the effigy as described, and see what happened. Sure enough, in rushed the were-wolf, fell on the straw image, and devoured it. As it ran off, they pursued it to the temple, where they saw it crouching on the ground. It was beaten severely, and lost its tail, but escaped, and never came back to the house again. If, at any time after that, the villagers saw a bobtailed wolf, they called the herdsman's name after it, when it would sneak off without looking at them.

The idea that were-animals were tailless was formerly prevalent in England. One of the witches in 'Macbeth' boasts of doing evil in the form of a 'rat without a tail.'

In A.D. 380, a poor man named Yuen Hsiang met a beautiful girl one day at dusk, and eventually married her. In five or six years their affairs improved; they had two sons; by degrees they became better off, and in ten years from the date of their marriage they were quite wealthy. Just then, a death occurred in the village. The night of the burial Yuen's wife hurried to the grave, changed into a tiger, dragged the coffin out of the ground, opened it, and devoured the corpse. When the corpse was eaten, she resumed her human form and went home. A neighbour saw what she did, and told her husband, but he refused to believe it. Later on, another villager died, and the same thing happened. So Yuen went out and watched her, and learned the truth. But his wife remained a tiger and took to the hills, scouring the district and devouring one corpse after another. (*Kuei Chi.*)

About the year A.D. 765, a village lad of twenty, after a severe illness, 'lost one of his souls,' which became a were-wolf. Many boys were missed from the village from that time onwards, and no one knew what had happened to them.

One day, while passing the dwelling of a family from whom a child had been taken, he heard the father call out to him, 'Come to-morrow. I have a job for you to do, and I'll give you a good meal in payment.' He had worked for the father before, so he gave a loud laugh and replied, 'Why should I? Do you think your son was so particularly savoury a morsel?' The father was astonished and questioned him. 'Nature orders me to devour men,' he answered. 'Yesterday I ate a boy five or six years old; his flesh was most delicious.' The father then noticed some traces of stale blood near the lad's mouth, so he attacked him fiercely with a stick, whereupon the lad turned into a wolf and expired. (*Hsüan Shib Chi.*)

There is a Croatian tale of a soldier who, watching one night in a haunted mill, saw a wolf enter, take off its skin, and come out in the form of a maiden. The soldier seized the skin, nailed it to the mill wheel, and married the were-wolf. They had two sons, the elder of whom heard people say that his mother was a wolf. He questioned his father and eventually learned the truth, and the meaning of the skin attached to the mill-wheel. The mother, enraged, ran away and was seen no more.

During the T'ang Period (7-9th centuries, A.D.), a Prefect of Ch'i Chou sent his son to Lo Yang, which was then the capital of the Empire, to petition that his father might be moved to another district.

The son was still within his father's prefecture when he met a large party, the escort of a very beautiful lady. He heard that she was a young widow, daughter of the Censor Lu, on her way to the capital. The young man made advances through her chaperon, but the duenna ridiculed the idea, telling him he was a mere nobody, not even a petty official. 'I am the son of the Prefect of Ch'i Chou,' he replied. 'That makes a difference,' said the duenna.

The young people met, and found each other charming, so they were married; and instead of proceeding to the capital, the newly-wed pair returned to Ch'i Chou.

The Prefect and his wife were rather indulgent to their son, whom they loved very much, so they did not criticise his hasty return. The bride made herself agreeable; she brought an extensive outfit with her, and for about a month everything was as it should be.

One night, the horses belonging to the young couple were unusually restive. The bride sent her maids to see what was the matter, and as soon as they had all left the house for the stables, she barred the door.

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Next morning the servants belonging to the Prefect ascertained that the horses and maids of his daughter-in-law's establishment were missing. He and his wife went to their son's room, but found the door barred and could get no answer when they knocked, so they broke open a window; and at that moment a she-wolf forced her way past them and fled. The body of the Prefect's son lay on the bed, almost entirely devoured.

\* \* \* \*

In Kuang Tung, at Ye Chou, a peasant woman about seventy years old began to show signs of turning into an animal. Hair grew, at first on her arms, and then on her body; then her back bent, and a tail grew from the end of her spine. Eventually, in the guise of a white wolf, she ran away. Once or twice a month she would return to see her children and grandchildren.

The neighbours were naturally afraid, and kept their swords and bows in readiness, hoping to get rid of her on one of her visits.

So the daughter-in-law of the wolf bought some pork, invited her to dine upon it, and said, 'Mother-in-law, we are your children, and are not afraid of you. But it is a different thing with the neighbours. They are determined to kill you, so you must not come and see us any more. We do not want any harm to come to you.'

The old wolf wept, wandered once more round the old home, and then ran off. Nothing more was heard of her.

\* \* \* \*

Before we leave the subject of were-wolves, it should be emphasized that they, as well as were-tigers, were held to have some mysterious connection with disease, especially delirium and insanity,—an important item of evidence *against* the 'totemistic' theory.

Both in China and in Europe, to know the name of a were-wolf or were-tiger, and challenge him by name, deprives him of much of his dangerous power. In all folk-lore the *true* name of any person is most important; those who know it can influence the owner by spells or sorcery more than they could an unknown person. ✕

Were-tigers, who are often man-eaters, are credited with super-human cunning in avoiding traps, etc., and the reason given is that the 'Hun,' or superior soul of a man who has been eaten by a tiger stays with the beast as a 'familiar spirit,' to help it in its hunting, and to keep it out of harm's way.

The *Kuang I Chi* tells of a youth who lived in the year A.D. 755, near a mountain. Whenever he took his cattle out to grass, he used to see a tiger with a spectre walking behind it. After seeing it more than ten times, he said to his parents:—'As that spectre brings the tiger with it, I am certain to be killed. People say that the souls of men killed by tigers become their familiar spirits, so that after my death, I shall become a spirit of that kind. When I do, I'll lead the tiger to the village, where you must prepare a pitfall in the main street in order to trap it.'

A few days later, the boy was killed, and appeared in a dream to his father, telling him when and where to have the tiger-trap ready; so the villagers caught and killed the tiger.

\* \* \* \* \*

The *Yüan Hua Chi* contains an account of a hunter who earned his living by catching tigers. He would set his cross-bow by the roadside, and come and inspect it each day. On each occasion he found the spoor of a tiger, but the arrow had been loosed without hitting anything.

Thinking the tiger must have a human spirit as its familiar, he decided to hide close by, and watch.



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Late that night, a little devil dressed in blue, with hair growing down to its eye-brows, cautiously approached the cross-bow, let off the arrow, and went away. Presently a tiger came by, trod against the cross-bow and passed on. The hunter crept from his hiding-place and set a fresh arrow; again the little devil appeared, and fired it off. Immediately the hunter ran out, set a third arrow, and hid once more. The tiger returned, set off the trap and was killed. A considerable time after, the devil came back, saw what had happened, and after gesticulating with rage, vanished.

\* \* \* \* \*

Occasionally the human ghost, turned tiger-leader, and known in China as Ch'ang Kuei, or 'vampire-spectre,' becomes a very powerful and dangerous phantom.

In the *Kuang I Chi* we read of a Ch'ang Kuei which met a casual passer-by in the hills, threw a tiger skin over him, and thus turned him into a were-tiger. For three or four years, the Ch'ang Kuei made him devour men and beasts, although he had no wish to do so. He was under the spell of the spectre.

One day, the unlucky were-tiger, guided by the spectre, was passing the gateway of a Buddhist monastery; whereupon he bolted into the monks' store-room and hid under the bed of the brother store-keeper. The scared monks ran to the abbot to tell him about it, so the abbot asked the help of a 'Dhyâna master' who happened to be staying in the monastery. (This man was an adept at Dhyâna or trance-like contemplation, and was able to tame wild beasts, like the Taoist Hsien, who, through long practice of self-control, were supposed to acquire the power of controlling other creatures.)

The 'Dhyâna-master' went into the store-room, laid his Buddhist staff upon the were-tiger, and asked him kindly what he wanted. The creature shed tears, and

made no attempt to attack the adept, so the latter tied a cloth round the were-tiger's neck, led him to his cell, and there fed him regularly on ordinary human food.

In six months' time, the were-tiger shed his fur, resumed human form, and told his tale. For two years he remained in the monastery, and at the end of that time he took an occasional stroll beyond the grounds. One day, he suddenly met the Ch'ang Kuei, which at once threw a tiger-skin over him. He cast it off, and retreated to the monastery; but the tiger-skin had touched his legs, and they resumed their tiger-shape. He then devoted himself for a year to reciting the sacred books, and became entirely human once more, but he never dared to leave the monastery again, and eventually died there.

\* \* \* \* \*

In A.D. 741, a tiger gave much trouble in Yü Chou, Western China. A spring trap was set, but the beast was never caught unawares. One night, at the time of the new moon, a man climbed a tree to watch the trap. He saw a Ch'ang Kuei in the shape of a child of seven, unclothed, the colour of jade. It released the spring of the trap and went off. The man descended from his tree, re-set the trap, and caught and killed the tiger.

Later on the child returned, crying, and entered the mouth of the dead tiger. At daybreak the man opened the tiger's mouth, and found in its throat a jade-stone as large as a hen's egg.

It may be remarked that the character 'jade' is held to be legible in the markings of the fur, upon the forehead of the tiger. Jade, among the minerals, is described in an ancient book as 'The most perfect development of the masculine (Yang) principle in nature,' and the tiger holds a similar primacy among the four-footed beasts, but as embodying the feminine principle (Yin).

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Next to the tiger and the wolf, the fox is one of the most important animal spectres in the world. Cunning, greedy and cowardly, it is a byword everywhere; but the word Fox is very commonly used as a surname in various European countries, and is also found in China. One may therefore lay some of its spectral misdeeds at the door of certain tribes or individuals to whom it served the purpose of a totem.

During the T'ang Period, two women of the Yang family were married to two men of the Hu family. (Hu, though written with a different character, is sounded like the Chinese word for a fox.)

Now the younger Hu was a great favourite of his mother-in-law, so the elder brother said to a servant girl, 'Mother-in-law does not like me, she prefers that fellow; he is a fox.' The girl repeated this to the mother-in-law, and suggested a test.

'Take a magpie's head,' said the servant, 'and hang it over the door. When the younger Hu comes in, tell his wife to say "he asks for cooked meat." If she repeats these words two or three times, he will run away.'

The test was made, and young Hu fled, thereby betraying the fact that he was a fox.

\* \* \* \*

During the sixth century, A.D., a rich man in a Southern town had a bedroom on the first floor of his house which was seldom entered in the daytime.

On one occasion, his wife, wishing to go up to this room to find some clothing, found the door barred. She peeped through a crack and saw a man sitting on the bed. She cried 'Thieves,' and the servants ran up to her assistance. The unknown man replied, 'I am settling here with my family. I am keeping your furniture, but you can have the other things.' Immediately all the small caskets, boxes, and other

light articles in the room were thrown out of the windows. At the same time other persons and children were heard pattering about, and the mysterious guests chanted, beating time on plates,

‘O master of the house! Your guests have come a thousand *li* to visit you, and you do not so much as welcome them with a cup of wine.’

The mistress and her servants were frightened, and forthwith set out four tables with wine and eatables. In a few moments, though no one could be seen, the wine and food disappeared, and the plates and cups fell down on to the ground floor.

The invisible guests stayed after that, although they did no harm to anyone; but the master of the house was uneasy, and consulted a Taoist priest. While the priest and the householder were conferring in the courtyard, the voices on the first floor chanted, ‘Dog, what are you doing here?’

The Taoist was then bundled out by invisible hands, and his images and magical outfit were thrown into the street after him.

After that, the invisible intruders kept up a racket day and night.

In despair, the householder sent for the Celestial Master, or chief priest of the Taoist cult, who had his headquarters in Kiang Si. He despatched a Taoist priest of high rank, and when this personage entered the courtyard, the voices sang: ‘Celestial Master, you can do nothing! Deputy Master, you have come in vain.’ And suddenly the Deputy High-Priest was lifted by the head and flung to the ground, lacerating his face and tearing his garments. ‘This Yao Kuai is too powerful for me,’ said he, ‘Master Hsie alone can drive it away.’

The master of the house then had to send for Master Hsie from the other end of the country. When Hsie entered the courtyard, no cries were heard. ‘A good

sign,' thought the master. Hsie raised an altar and began his incantations, when a flash of red light was seen, and an old man with a white beard came down from the heavens and said to the invisible intruders on the first floor, 'Do not be afraid, I shall counteract his charms.'

Meanwhile, Hsie was juggling with a porringer. It began by running along the ground, faster, and then faster; then by leaps, it bounded in the direction of the first floor. 'When it gets there,' said Hsie, 'the charm will take effect.'

Just as it nearly reached the windows, the bearded apparition sounded a copper bell, and the bowl fell down, motionless; Hsie could not get another move out of it. 'I give it up,' he said, and went off with his paraphernalia, while the invisible ones laughed and jeered at him.

The house remained in possession of these unwelcome intruders until one winter's night, in an unusually heavy fall of snow, a party of hunters came and asked for shelter.

The master of the house welcomed them, and told his tale.

'We know all about this sort of thing,' said the hunters. 'They are foxes, and as soon as we have had something to eat and drink, we'll settle them.'

A liberal meal and abundant potations were pressed upon them; and taking their fowling-pieces (a later touch?), they made a great noise firing blank cartridges at the windows of the first floor. The whole place was wreathed in smoke.

The next day, at dawn, the hunters took their leave; the master of the house (rather uncomfortable in his mind), remarking as they went, 'These foxes will treat us worse than ever now, out of revenge.' But nothing happened, so he went upstairs, and found

the place empty. The windows were half open, and the floor was littered with foxes' hair.

Violent noise has been, from the earliest times, part of the exorcising process; exploding joints of bamboo in a fire, lighting squibs, and discharging blank cartridges have the additional advantage of applying light and fire to the uncanny visitor, who—in China as elsewhere—is a lover of darkness.

The bravery of the hunters is aptly contrasted with the discouragement of the wizards, who, no doubt, believed—as most Chinese practitioners of magic do—that incantations which miss their aim not infrequently recoil upon and injure the magician himself.

\* \* \* \* \*

An unusually respectable group of were-foxes haunted the grave of King Hwuy of Yen (N. China) who reigned 277-270 B.C. They are described as having lived in fox-form for a thousand years; they were disguised Shên, or spiritual beings of a high order, such as are seldom met with in animal shapes.

When they heard of the virtues and scholarship of Chang Hua, a public-spirited minister of the Ch'in Dynasty then reigning in another part of China, they took the shape of young students of high talent and good address, and rode off to make his acquaintance. As they passed by the grave, the spirit of the Tree of Glorification said to them, 'Where are you going?' So they told him. 'Ah,' replied the tree-spirit, 'I warn you he is very clever. He will find you out, and you will come to harm.' But the foxes disregarded the tree-spirit, and rode on to the house of Chang Hua.

For three days they enjoyed his society, and all seemed to be going well. Then Chang Hua began to feel suspicious about them, and it occurred to him that they might be spectres. He had a sleeping-

place swept clean for them, and invited them to stay with him ; and when they went in to rest, he set men to watch them. While they were staying with him a certain Lei called upon Chang, who told him of his suspicions. Lei shouted with laughter, and said ' You,—who are Chief Minister, who at your own discretion judge of the abilities of Public Servants and promote or degrade them at will—surely you are not jealous of these young fellows' talents ? If you say men are spectres because they are clever, you simply cast a doubt on your own intelligence. Anyhow, if you are uncertain, call the dogs, and see how they behave.'<sup>1</sup>

The dogs were called, but nothing happened, so Chang Hua said, ' Perhaps these youths are spectres of over a hundred years' standing ; otherwise the appearance of the dogs would have forced them to resume their true shape. They may be spectres of a thousand years' standing, in which case they will not change unless fire produced by a living tree a thousand years old, or more, is made to shine on them.'

' But,' said Lei, ' how can we find such a tree ? '

' People say,' replied Chang Hua, ' that the Tree of Glorification, by the tomb of King Hwuy of Yen, is of that age.'

So servants were sent to fetch the tree, and on reaching it they saw, in a hole in the tree, a child dressed in blue. The servants told him their errand, whereupon the child cried out, ' What fools these old foxes were not to heed my warning ! The evil they have done will extend to me ; we cannot escape it ! ' Crying thus, and weeping, the blue-clad child suddenly vanished. The servants cut down the tree, from which blood gushed profusely. When they took it home

<sup>1</sup> The idea that dogs can discern evil spirits is also very widespread outside of China.

and burnt it, the young men resumed the shape of foxes. Whereupon Chang Hua cooked them !

\* \* \* \* \*

An old tumble-down grave is easily transformed by a *real* fox into a convenient burrow, and this fact may have helped to increase the uncanny reputation of the beast. The talking tree which shed blood when cut is an example of animism, very common in Chinese folk-lore, and occasionally met with elsewhere.

Many years ago, a Buddhist monk, named Chi Hsüan, led a very holy and mortified life. He never wore silk, tramped from town to town on foot, and slept in the open. One moonlight night, he was preparing to sleep in a copse adjoining a grave, ten miles from a city in Shan Si. By the light of the moon he saw a wild fox place on its head a skull and some withered bones, go through several mysterious movements, and then deck itself out with grass and leaves. Presently the fox assumed the form of a beautiful woman, very quietly and plainly dressed, and in this guise it wandered out of the copse on to the adjoining high road. As the trampling of a horseman's mount became audible, coming from the North-West, the woman began to weep and wail, her attitude and gestures showing extreme grief. A man on horseback approached, pulled his horse up, and alighted.

'Lady,' he cried, 'what brings you here, alone, in the night? Can I help you?'

The woman stopped crying, and told her tale.

'I am the widow of So-and-so. My husband died suddenly last year, leaving me penniless; my parents live a long way off. I do not know the way, and there is no one I can turn to, to help me to get back to my home.'

When he heard where her parents lived, the horseman said :

'I come from that place, and I am now on my way



home again. If you do not mind rough travelling, you may ride my horse, and I will walk beside it.'

The woman accepted gratefully, and vowed she would never forget the horseman's kindness. She was just on the point of mounting, when the monk, Chi Hsüan, came out of the copse, crying to the horseman, 'Beware! She is not human; she is a were-fox. If you do not believe me, wait a few moments and I will make her resume her true shape.'

So he made a sign, or *mudra*, with his fingers, uttered a *dhârani* (or spell) and cried in a loud voice, 'Why do you not return at once to your original form?'

The woman immediately fell down, turned into an old fox, and expired. Her flesh and blood flowed away like a stream, and nothing remained but the dead fox, a skull, a few dry bones, and some leaves and blades of grass.

The cavalier, quite convinced, prostrated himself several times before the priest, and went away full of astonishment.

\* \* \* \* \*

People named Hu—a fairly common surname which is pronounced in the same manner as the Chinese word for 'Fox,' though written differently—are often personated in folk-tales by foxes disguised as human beings.

In the old state of Wu, many centuries ago, lived a very elderly man of letters, of immense learning, who was commonly known as Dr. Hu. He had a large number of disciples. Suddenly he disappeared. Then, on the 9th of the ninth month, a number of his students went for a stroll in the hills. Presently they heard the sound of a human voice, reading a book aloud and explaining its contents. They sent some servants to see what was going on. So the servants went ahead until they came to an empty grave, in which were a number of foxes, in orderly rows. On seeing

the servant approach, they vanished, and one old fox was the only one left. When the students came up, they recognised the venerable Dr. Hu.

\* \* \* \*

Han Yu was a famous diviner, who died A.D. 312. He was consulted about the obstinate illness of a daughter of one Liu-Shi-Tsé. Various Wu<sup>1</sup> had attacked the disease-demon, and had captured, in empty graves and old city walls, dozens of foxes and lizards, but to no purpose. Han then consulted the divining-sticks, and ordered a linen bag to be made, which he hung up by the window of the girl's room when she had one of her worst attacks. He then closed the door and blew, as if he were expelling something from his mouth. The bag, hanging at the other side of the room, swelled as if inflated with air. Presently it burst, and the girl's illness got worse. Han then made two strong bags of leather, and hung them by the girl's window, and these, in turn, swelled, as if inflated, to their full extent. Then he rapidly secured the mouths of the bags and hung them up on a tree. For three weeks they slowly shrank; and at length, when opened, two pounds of foxes' hair was taken out of them. The girl recovered.

The last-quoted tale is interesting on account of the references to the Wu blowing away the disease-demons by the magical use of his own breath. One of the meanings of 'Ch'i' is 'breath,' in the sense of the Latin 'spiritus'; and breathing has a ritual significance in many times and places.

The imprisonment of the fox-devils in bags reminds one that in a German fairy-tale, the demons which infested an enchanted castle were disposed of in the same way.

\* \* \* \*

The connection of demons with disease is common

<sup>1</sup> Diviners.

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to all folk-mythologies, and the relation of animal demons to mental trouble and delirious visions may be an indication of one of the sources of were-wolf legends and similar stories, both in China and elsewhere. This will be noticed in quite a number of the tales quoted in various parts of this book.

In the year A.D. 483, a Buddhist monk of the Blue Dragon Monastery in Shangtu had a brother, Fan Ch'ing, who was very ill with fever, and laughed and talked wildly in his delirium. The monk burned incense and used all his mental powers to try and calm his brother, but in vain. One day the patient began to revile him: 'Monk, go back to your Monastery and your Abbot! Why do you interfere with my affairs? I am dwelling in Nanko, and I am in love with you; but the grain grows thick and there are so many harvesters about that I can only come to you for a short time.'

These words caused the monk to suspect that his brother was obsessed by a fox-demon. So he took a branch of a peach tree (efficacious against devils) and beat the patient with it. The delirious man cried sneeringly, 'Go on! Beat your elder brother and disobey the gods! Beat harder! The gods will kill you for it!'

The monk desisted, discouraged. The patient then grew violent; he dragged his mother about so brutally that she died of the effects of his handling; he seriously maltreated his wife and his younger brother. Still the monk watched, wondering what he could do. The patient, his violence exhausted, turned on him. 'As you won't go away, I'll gather my family around me.' No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the squeaking of many rats was heard, and hundreds of rats, larger than the usual size and utterly fearless, filled the house.

(The explanation of this, according to Chinese

ideas, is that when the delirium abated, the fox-devil was out of the patient for a short time ; and the rats, no longer in fear of the fox, appeared during his absence. Fox-devils can summon or dismiss rat or mouse-devils, in shoals, whenever they wish to, just as the celebrated European vampire 'Dracula' had command over wolves, bats, etc.)

The delirious patient next day told his brother, the monk, that he could spare his breath, for to-day 'my great brother, Cold Moon, will come. Cold moon, come !' screamed the madman, and a huge red fox sprang from the feet of the patient. It crouched on the bed, its eyes darting fire ; so the priest seized his sword and struck one of its paws. It leapt down and ran for the door, whence the priest tracked it by its bleeding paw to a certain house, where it crept into an earthen jar. The priest put a dish over the top of the jar, and sealed it down with clay ; and in three days the beast was stiff as a board, and could not move. So he destroyed it by frying it in oil, the stench of which was perceptible for miles around. His brother then recovered.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

The duplicity of the fox is brought out in the following tale.

During the period A.D. 785-805, a Mr. P'ei had a son just over ten years of age, who was amiable, accomplished and handsome, and to whom he was devotedly attached. The boy fell ill, and for ten days got gradually worse. Medicine was useless, and P'ei was on the point of hiring a Taoist adept, when a man—a stranger—who gave his name as Kao, knocked at the door, and said he could cure illnesses with charms. P'ei took him in to see the boy.

'This is only an illness caused by a fox-demon,' said Kao, 'I can cure it.'

The father thanked him. Kao then, by his charms,

questioned the demon and called it out of the boy, and the next moment the little fellow jumped up, crying, 'I am cured !'

The father feasted Kao, paid him a liberal fee, and escorted him to the door. Kao departed, saying, as he left, 'Henceforth I will call every day.'

But although the boy was cured of disease, his Shên Hun, or superior soul, did not seem to function normally, for he had occasional fits of wild talking, or laughing or crying without cause. Every time Kao called, the father asked him to attend the boy, but Kao said :

'The child's vital spirits are held bound by a spectre still, and are not quite restored to him ; but he'll be all right in ten days or so.'

The father believed him, and waited a few days longer.

Presently, within the ten days, a Dr. Wang called and assured P'ei that he could expel demons and charm away disease. 'I am told,' said Wang, 'that your beloved son is ill, and is not yet cured ; I should like to see him.'

P'ei let him examine his son, whereupon Wang, in a tone of alarm, said : 'He has a fox-disease ; if he is not treated at once, it will be serious.'

The father then told Dr. Wang about the magician Kao, and Wang said, with a smile, 'How do you know he was not a fox ?'

So they sat down to a meal, and Wang began reprimanding and questioning the fox-devil, when in walked Kao !

The moment he entered he began upbraiding the father, crying out, 'What are you doing ? The boy is cured, and you bring a fox into his room ! It was a fox that caused his illness !'

'Why, truly, here is a wicked fox ! How could his arts expel a fox-demon ?' retorted Wang.

While the two experts were roundly abusing one another, unexpectedly a Taoist priest appeared at the gate.

‘I have heard,’ said the priest to the porter, ‘that your master’s son is sorely afflicted with a fox-disease ; I am a discerner of spirits ; offer my services to your master.’

P’ei went to the gate, explained the position to the Taoist, and brought him in. Then the other two turned on the Taoist and called him a fox, so P’ei had his son removed from the room, and he, his boy, and the servants left the three of them to fight it out, locking the door of the bedroom as they retreated.

By nightfall the noise had stopped. P’ei and his servants opened the door, and saw three foxes lying panting and exhausted on the ground. They speedily killed the brutes with sticks, and in ten days the boy had quite recovered.

\* \* \* \* \*

The belief that foxes can take the form of beautiful women is very widely spread in China and Japan, and many tales and even poems on the subject are extant.

A well-known statesman and writer of the T’ang period, who lived from A.D. 771 to 847, summarized this superstition in the following stanzas :

“ When a fox-spectre of an old grave is growing old,  
It changes into a woman of lovely features ;  
Its head changes into a female coiffure, its face into a painted  
countenance ;  
The big tail it trails behind becomes a long red petticoat.  
Slowly she strides along the paths between the rustic  
hamlets,  
And where at sunset no human sounds are heard  
She sings, she dances, and alternately laments and wails,  
Without raising her eyebrows, velvety as the kingfisher,  
but bowing her pretty face,  
She bursts into a fit of laughter, a thousand, a myriad of  
joys.

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

Eight or nine out of ten who behold her are beguiled ;  
If false beauties may fascinate man in such a manner,  
The attraction exercised by genuine beauties cannot fail to  
surpass it.  
Such false and such genuine beauties both can bewilder a  
man,  
But the human mind dislikes what is false, and prefers what  
is real :  
Hence a fox disguised as a female-devil can do but little  
harm,  
Nor can it beguile a man's eyes for more than a day or a  
night ;  
But a woman acting like a fox-enchantedress is the cause of  
utter ruin,  
For she can make a man's mind boil (!) for day and months  
together."

All were-foxes are not wicked and uncanny, however,  
as the following tale shows.

A certain Ch'ê, not rich, but rather given to wine-bibbing, one night found himself unable to sleep ; and as he was subject to this trouble he generally kept two or three bottles of wine near his bed, as a remedy for insomnia. He put out his hand to pick up the bed-clothes, which seemed to have slipped off, and touched a furry object !

He lit a candle, and there, beside him, on his bed, lay a fox, dead-drunk, and he saw that one of his wine-bottles was quite empty.

' A boon companion, eh ? ' he cried with a laugh.

However, he covered it up and lay down again, keeping the candle burning to see what transformation might take place. About midnight the fox stretched itself, and Ch'ê said : ' Well, now, you have had a good rest ! ' The fox removed the bed-clothes, and stood up in the form of a well-bred young man, wearing the costume of a scholar ; he made Ch'ê a low bow, and was very grateful to him for not cutting off his head.

‘Oh,’ said Ch’ê, ‘I’m fond of a glass myself: a little too fond, if you like. We shall have many a merry bout together.’

The fox agreed, and both went to bed again, but when he awoke next morning, Ch’ê found himself alone.

The following evening the fox returned, and they had a carouse; the fox proving himself a stout toper, and so witty and entertaining that Ch’ê regretted they had not met before. ‘But I can never repay your kindness,’ said the fox, ‘in entertaining me so well.’ ‘What is a pint or so of wine?’ said Ch’ê. ‘Don’t speak of it!’

‘Well,’ said the fox, ‘I know you are only a poor scholar, and money is hard to come by. I must see if I can put anything in your way!’

The following evening, when the fox turned up to make a night of it, he said to Ch’ê: ‘Two miles down the road towards the South-East, you will find some silver lying by the wayside. Get there early in the morning, and secure it.’ Ch’ê did so.

The next time they met, the fox told Ch’ê to open a vault in his backyard; Ch’ê did so, and found 100 strings of cash. Ch’ê thought his fortune was made, and that he need do no more than drink and enjoy himself. But the fox was more prudent.

A few days later, the fox said, ‘Buckwheat is very cheap to-day. Buy up all you can.’ Ch’ê bought 40 tons, and was immensely chaffed over it, but a bad drought followed and Ch’ê cleared about a thousand per cent. profit on his deal. Ch’ê then bought 200 acres of rich land, and always planted his seeds under the fox’s advice. He married and had children, and the fox came in and out of the house like one of the family; but when Ch’ê died, elderly and prosperous, the fox went away and was never seen again.

\* \* \* \*



Even the harmless necessary donkey is known to do uncanny things at times. In the year A.D. 742, we are told, a certain Wang Hsun lived in the village of Yen Shou, district of Ch'ang An. One night three people came to supper with him. They had just finished eating when a large, black, hairy arm appeared under the candle-light. Hsun and his friends were startled; still more, when a voice was heard coming from the other side of the light, saying:

'Sir, you have guests, but may I call on you for one moment? I want some meat; put it into my hand.'

Hsun handed some meat to the arm, which took it and withdrew. Again it appeared, demanded meat, grasped it, and vanished. The next time it appeared, Hsun and his friends drew their swords and hacked at it. It fell to the ground, and behold!—there was the leg of a donkey lying bleeding on the floor. Next morning they found a track of blood leading from the amputated leg to a house in the village. The occupants said they had had a donkey for over twenty years which last night had lost a leg, apparently from a sword cut: they were very perturbed, and unable to account for it. On hearing of the spectral arm they decided to kill the donkey and eat it. (*Hsüan Shib Chi*.)

Other domestic animals are credited with playing devilish pranks at night, and goats—which, for some reason were formerly associated with earth spirits—are more often mentioned than pigs, cows or asses. The goat is also an important figure in European demonology.

The *T'ai P'ing Kuang Chi* contains a tale of a were-snake or serpent-demon that molested Confucius himself.

Yen Hwui and Tzu Lu were seated at the gate of the Master, when a spectre called to see him. Its eyes glared like suns, and its terrible appearance threw Tzu Lu into a fainting fit. Yen Hwui, however, armed

himself, stepped forward, and grappled the spectre by the loins to wrestle with it. It immediately turned into a snake, which he slew with his sword. The Master came out to see what had happened, and said, with a sigh, 'The bold man has no fear, wisdom is not misled; the wise man is not bold, the bold man does not of necessity possess wisdom.' We are told in the 'Analects' that Confucius did not talk about marvels, feats of strength, treasons, rebellions and ghosts; but seeing how he loved and respected Yen Hwui, and mourned at his early death, one would expect a better acknowledgment of his pluck and presence of mind than the tepid platitude put into the Sage's mouth by the writer of this story.

Other snake demons are feared as causing leprosy, ulcers, madness and a host of different ailments; toads, likewise, are credited with evil powers.

During the T'ang Period, the daughter of a petty official fell ill. She ate and drank irregularly, sometimes sang, sometimes wept without cause; or tore her clothes and ran madly about. A diviner was called in, but his sacrifices, spells and music had no effect. While the medicine-man was at his antics, a passenger boat was moored close to the dwelling of the sick girl, and a man, lying on the boat to rest, saw in a deep ditch a huge toad, as big as a bowl, with red eyes and hairy legs, dancing to the magic drums. The man hauled the beast up with a bamboo, and tied it to an oar. At that moment he heard the girl cry out: 'Why do you bind my husband?' Whereupon he knocked at the door saying, 'I can cure diseases like this.' The father, overjoyed, asked his fee.

'Not more than a few thousand cash,' said the visitor.

'I love my daughter above everything,' said the father. 'I have spent so much in vain, trying to cure

her, that I don't care how much I pay now ; I will double your fee.'

So the passenger boiled the toad in oil, and next day the girl was quite cured. (*Chi Kuai Luh.*)

The butterfly as an emblem of the human soul, and occasionally as its vehicle, is an idea common to most nations.

The *Kuei Hsin Tsa Shi* (fourteenth century A.D.) tells how Yang Hao married the young and beautiful Miss Ch'iang. After some years she had a son ; and when Yang Hao died, away from home, a butterfly as large as the palm of her hand fluttered around the widow, and did not leave her for the whole of the next day. When she called her family together, and, weeping bitterly, told them what had occurred, the butterfly appeared again, and never left her whether she was eating, drinking, moving or resting. It was Yang Hao, who so loved his young wife and little son that he took the form of a butterfly in order to be near them.

The universal bird-myth takes the following form in China. A certain young man of Kiang Si province one day saw six or seven girls, dressed in feather garments, in a field. Not knowing that they were not ordinary women, he crept towards them and seized a feather dress which one of them had taken off. He snatched it up and hid it ; but as he was seen to approach, all flew away except she whose dress he had taken. This one he married, and she bore three daughters. The mother later on caused the girls to question their father, and they eventually succeeded in learning where he had hidden their mother's feather dress. She found it, put it on and flew away. Then she came back to fetch her daughters, who turned into birds and flew away with her.

The parrot, which can be taught to speak, is sometimes the repository of a human soul, and it is, on the whole, rather surprising that it is not the subject of more stories.

One legend of the T'ang Period treats of the wealthy Liu Ch'ien, who had one daughter; she was clever, good-tempered and pretty, and had had many offers of marriage. Her father withheld his consent to her marriage from day to day, although the story does not say why.

The girl had a parrot which talked better than most; and its mistress trained it until it could repeat a whole chapter of the Buddhist scriptures. When the bird knew the chapter properly, she would burn incense while it muttered the Sûtra.

At length the parrot said to its mistress, 'Open my cage and get into it yourself; to-day I must leave you.' 'I don't understand,' said Miss Liu. 'Originally you had the form of a parrot,' replied the bird, 'and you obtained your human form in this house. Do not be astonished; men do not know you were a parrot, but I do; and now you will have to return to your own people.'

The girl was frightened and told her parents. They let the parrot go, but in three days, in spite of every care and vigilance, the daughter died. The parents mourned her loss very much; but just as they were on the point of burying her body, she turned into a white parrot and flew away. Her corpse disappeared. (*T'ang Chi Shi*.)

The owl, as in Europe, is much feared.

An eighth century writer says:

'When the owl enters a house . . . it will be depopulated; but it is harmless when it steadfastly remains in the same spot. When anyone hears it emit a cry like a laugh, he should hurry away.'

'In the north . . . are two varieties . . . hsiun and hu ; . . . they are so named from the sounds which they utter, and have eyes like kittens ; when they send forth a cry like a laugh, somebody is sure to die. The hsiu-liu, a smaller variety, is yellow ; it enters houses at night, and there gathers finger-nails, becoming acquainted from them with the good and bad fortunes of the inmates. When it is caught, finger-nails are found in its crop ; hence those who clip their nails bury them within the house.'

(European witches, as we know, always tried to secure the nail-pairings of those whom they wished to injure.)

Another kind of spectral bird can steal away the dual soul of man. When it puts off its feathers, it is a woman ; she was transformed into this bird in consequence of having died in childbirth, and babies who die in convulsions are those she desires to have in place of her own children.

Yet another soul-stealing bird, which formerly had ten heads, is afraid of dogs, having had one of its heads bitten off by a dog. The blood of dogs, poured out in sacrifice, is useful in revealing and disarming spectres ; otherwise this story is not of any special interest, apart from its illustrating the utterly unlimited scope of the Chinese fancy in inventing goblins.

Spectral rats are associated with melancholy, and a word for illness which has been analysed to mean ' rat disease ' is used for ' sadness ' in a very ancient ode.

In A.D. 492 a haunted house was exorcised, according to a story book of the T'ang Period, and in the morning the supposed spectres were seen to be five or six large red rats, hairless, and about two feet in length.

We are told that the haunting ceased so far as that house was concerned ; but nothing is said of the

eventual fate of the individual who saw large red rats in the early morning. Melancholy is not usually associated with visions of that kind.

During the Han Period an insurrection was being planned in the house of one T'ien Kuang, when a wild cat was heard to mew upon the roof of the house. T'ien Kuang was much disturbed, and a short while after the plot was discovered, and he was executed.

A quaint Taoist tale is told of ants.

A Mr. Ho Kuan was very kind hearted, and could not bear the idea of killing any living creature.

He had a jar containing one thousand silver coins, which he kept in a box. The white ants got in, and much of the silver was missed. His family, who believed that the insects had eaten the silver, tracked the white ants to a large nest, and suggested that the creatures should be melted up in a crucible, in the hope of recovering part of the silver. But Ho would not hear of it.

That very night he had a dream. An army of soldiers in white armour brought him a carriage, and begged him to enter it and visit their King's palace. He did so, and received a right royal welcome.

The King apologised for the depredations caused by his subjects, and thanked Ho for his clemency towards them. He told him of a tree under which was buried a jar of silver, and regretted that Ho was already too old to enjoy the reward of his good deed; but the King promised prosperity to his descendants.

Ho awoke, dug up the ground where he was told, and found the treasure. His son became a famous scholar.

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

The spiritual and mental characteristics attributed by the Chinese to animals of so many kinds do not exhaust their myth-making powers. Purely imaginary creatures, mostly sent as omens or signs from Heaven, are a well-marked feature of their folk-lore, as we shall see in the next chapter.

## VI

### DRAGONS AND MONSTERS

THE Chinese have always had a tendency to personify the mysterious powers of nature in the guise of monsters. The ancient Romans used the word 'monstrum' (literally, 'something shown') as an indication, a portent of some event momentous enough for the gods to send forth a warning of it; and the same thing is related of early Chinese history.

A prehistoric Emperor saw a 'dragon-horse' arise out of the waters of the Yellow River, bearing on its back diagrams symbolic of the operations of Yang and Yin; similarly the Babylonian tradition mentions Ea, the fish-god, who came up out of the Persian Gulf to teach the people the rudiments of civilisation.

The lin or unicorn is related to have appeared in China from time to time, as a harbinger of good government, or at the birth of a virtuous ruler.

It is represented as having the body of a deer, the tail of an ox, and a single horn. It is the incarnate essence of the five primordial elements—*i.e.* Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth—attains the age of one thousand years, and is full of kindness and goodwill towards all creatures.

A French writer of the thirteenth century describes men with a single horn on their foreheads, who lived in the deserts of India and fought with certain mounted bowmen. (Probably Central Asian horsemen, like those who figured as Centaurs in Greek myth.)

A Chinese translation of a lost Sûtra of the Northern



## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

Buddhist school tells of a man whose father was a recluse and whose mother was a doe; his feet were hoofs, and he had a single horn. The head-dress of the women of a non-Chinese tribe near the Burmese frontier is a well-marked imitation of a single horn. (Miss Kemp.) The celebrated Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, born 1190, who served Genghis or Chinghis Khan as prime-minister, accompanied the great Khan in 1224 in his campaign against India. In the Kara Dagh regions the expedition met a creature 'like a deer, with a head like that of a horse, one horn on its forehead, and green hair on its body.'

The creature addressed the guards, saying, 'It is time for your master to return to his own land.' Chinghis thereupon consulted Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, who replied:

'That creature is the Chio-tuan. It knows every language. It appears as a sign that bloodshed is needless at present. For four years the great army has been warring in Western regions. Heaven, which has a horror of bloodshed, gives warning through the Chio-tuan. Spare the Empire for Heaven's sake; moderation will give boundless pleasure.'

Chinghis thereupon took his wise minister's advice, as described in J. Curtin's *History of the Mongols*, to which we owe this curious story.

Kao Yao, Minister of Crime to the Emperor Shun, 2255 B.C., had a 'one-horned goat' which knew the innocent from the guilty. It would butt the guilty with its single horn, but refused to attack those wrongly accused.

During the reign of Wu Ti of the Han Dynasty, a white 'unicorn' was captured. It had really two horns, but they touched, 'just as the land under Heaven unites and forms one whole,' as a courtier observed. The creature was accordingly regarded as an auspicious omen. It was noted that this particular



狻猊  
即獅



"Lion"

unicorn had five toes on each foot, in lieu of the deer's hoof.

The 'Spring and Autumn' Annals relate how some hunters (in the Western part of the State of Lu), found a dead unicorn and brought it to Confucius. He was alarmed and disturbed. A live unicorn would have been an omen of a good prince; the then reigning Emperor and the Duke Ai of Lu were not all they should have been. The dead unicorn was therefore an unlucky presage.

The lifetime of Confucius (551-479 B.C.) was an age of strife and turmoil, during which the enfeebled power of the Emperor was no perceptible check on the greedy and jealous vassal princes. The Sage's advice and warnings were flouted by most of these turbulent individuals, the whole country was laid waste—sometimes in one quarter, sometimes in another—by civil war, very much as it is now; lucky omens did not appear. Unless Confucius had been firmly convinced of his mission from Heaven to transmit the teachings of the good Emperors of antiquity to their degenerate successors, he would not have persevered with his thankless task.

The 'lion,' a curly poodle-like animal often seen in bronze or stone, in front of temples, is almost a monster. Buddha was symbolised as a lion, his voice proclaiming the Good Law, being heard without difficulty throughout the Universe; but true lions are not found in China, and the animal which goes by that name in Chinese art owes much to the exuberant fancy of the race.

The important effects of inaccuracy in dealing with foreign men and animals are once more thrust upon our attention.

The dragon, in one form or another, is very widely known in Europe as well as Asia; usually in the form of a gigantic lizard-like creature, able

to fly, but haunting mountain-caves or noisome swamps.

The Western dragon is nearly always evil. Its breath is fiery or poisonous ; it requires human sacrifices ; it is a thing to be destroyed by a solar hero, a clean-living knight-errant, or a saint. It is associated with the snake, the spiritual and temporal enemy of Western humanity ; with fire ; or with deadly disease.

The Welsh bard Taliesin is said to have prophesied that Prince Maelgwyn would be destroyed by a creature with yellow teeth, eyes, and hair, which should arise out of a marsh—the yellow plague of the ninth century A.D.

The Arthurian title, Pendragon (‘ dragon head ’) of British legend, however, is explained as having been the prerogative of the overlord, or ruler of the ‘ kings ’ of the various parts of Keltic Britain. This curious exception to the usual Western idea of the dragon is one of the so-far unexplained links between Eastern Asia and the pre-Christian culture of the ‘ Kelts ’ to which we shall have occasion to refer later on. In other respects the dragon of China is on quite a different footing from that of Europe.

Early animistic rites, in all warm climates, are largely concerned with prayers for rain ; drought is the great evil, from which come famine and pestilence. Drums were beaten by the prehistoric Wu or ‘ Shamans ’ to mimic thunder, and thus to induce it ; and traditional rain-drums, from Burma, South China, and the adjoining lands, are still to be seen, decorated with little figures of frogs. Frogs are associated with flooded rice-fields, and their croaking, when water is abundant, is music to the anxious farmer’s ear.

The Chinese dragon rises from the sea into the clouds, and thence descends in the form of fertilising rain. He symbolises and personifies the actual opera-

tion of nature in the evaporation and condensation of water-vapour. The earliest extant drawings of Chinese dragons are of rude workmanship, and very fish-like of aspect ; in the next artistic stage, as exemplified by the jade funeral-objects of the Han Period—roughly two centuries B.C. and two centuries after—the transition towards a vigorous and plastic reptile-form is clearly shown. The wealthy people of those times buried symbolic rings and discs of jade with their dead ; a fortunate circumstance, as the disinterred relics of that age are of great help in studying the growth of the dragon-symbol, and, simultaneously, the improvement in skill and taste which marked the Han Period.

The conception of the beneficent genius of water was, of course, conspicuously emphasised, then and earlier, in ' cloud,' ' thunder,' and ' wave ' decorations, and in dragons fish-like or reptilian.

In various old books, we read that :

' In the depths of mountains and in vast marshes . . . dragons really grow ' ;

' Where the mountains are highest, the rain-clouds rise, and where the water is deepest, the different species of dragons are born ' ;

' When Yü crossed the Yang Tzû, a yellow dragon carried his boat on its back ' ;

(The Great Yü, the Emperor who reclaimed flooded lands and controlled the water-courses, twenty-third century B.C.)

In the annals of the Han Period, two yellow dragons are said to have appeared in a narrow gorge through which the Hsiang River flows, in Hu Nan. They came out of the water, gambolled about with some creatures like colts (possibly their young), and returned to the river. They were larger than horses, and were ' just like the dragons shown in pictures.'

Clay dragons were set up at the time of the rain-

sacrifices in very early times, to attract the rain-clouds, on account of the affinity between them.

( A feudal ruler of Confucian times had dragons painted on every available wall, plate, or dish. Wang Ch'ung, the sceptical philosopher, opines that his must have been an uncommonly rainy principality !

( In the Palaces of the Hsia Emperors, 2205-1766 B.C., tame dragons were kept, and actually yoked to carriages. They fled at the downfall of the dynasty. Until those dragons went away (*i.e.* while they were on earth, and neither in the sky nor in the water) was there continuous drought ? asks Wang Ch'ung.

( After the importation of Buddhism, we find that stories of the Nâga of Indian legend, the Serpent God of the waters and his attendants, inevitably came to be mixed with the dragon-legends of China. Whether Buddhism adopted the dragon—as it adopted so many things of which Buddha would have disapproved—or whether the dragon, 'who was there first,' has had a modifying effect upon the Buddhism of China, it is not easy to say.

The Chinese, with their love of lists and categories, specify a number of different kinds of dragon.

The following are probably the most important :

( The K'uei (no connection with the devils described in other chapters). This is a conventionalised dragon-form found on the bronzes of the Chou Period (1100-250 B.C.) ; a creature supposed to exercise a restraining influence against the sin of greed.

The T'ao T'ieh, translated by Dr. Legge as 'glutton,' standing for an embodiment of the vices of sensuality and avarice, and depicted as a warning against self-indulgence.

The Ch'ih Lung, a primitive type of dragon without horns or scales ; still often used in decoration.

The T'an, designated by a character meaning 'avarice.'



Dragon Bowl





## DRAGONS AND MONSTERS

This creature is painted on the screen-wall in front of Yamên or court-houses, as a warning to magistrates not to take bribes.

Then we have :

Ssü Lung Wang, Four Dragon Kings, rulers over the four seas ;

T'ien Lung, the Celestial Dragon, which supports and guards the mansions of the gods ;

The Shên Lung or 'Spiritual' Dragon, who causes the wind to blow and the beneficent rain to water the ground ;

The Earth Dragon, who marks out the courses of rivers and streams ;

The Dragon of Hidden Treasure, in charge of the metals and precious stones buried in the earth.

Besides these, various writers mention white, fiery red, and striped dragons ; river dragons ; and so forth.

On account of its association with all that is good and lucky, the dragon enters largely into the fantastic landscape gardening which is so characteristic of China.

If a wall has to be bent or curved, it will, if possible, be topped by a dragon in glazed pottery ; the curves of his body symbolising hills, and, by association, fertilising streams. Bridges over ponds and streams are made zig-zag to typify dragons ; the pond itself will probably be laid out in a reptilian shape ; the trees and shrubs will be trimmed into the shapes of dragons ; the trunks of dwarfed and warped trees—much prized if they are old—will be likened to dragons. Even doors, windows, and traceried walls of carved wood or open-work tiling, and the ends of the beams from which shop-signs are hung, are used to express or imply the forms of dragons.

Sometimes a picture of a dragon has magical power.

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

The celebrated artist Wu Tao Tzŭ (eighth century A.D.) once painted a large dragon on a wall ; when he put in its eyes, a violent storm of rain arose, and the dragon took life and soared up to the clouds, leaving the wall blank.

In the extreme South of China, Lung Mu, the Dragon Mother, is much revered by seafaring men. In the reign of Shih Huang Ti (221 B.C.), she was a simple fisherwoman, who one day took home to her hut an enormous egg which she had found on the bank of a river. The egg, in due course, hatched out a monster which followed her about as if domesticated, and helped her in her fishing. One day, she accidentally lopped off part of its tail, so it left her ; but some years later it returned, in the form of a splendid full-grown dragon. She was summoned to Court to give an account of this portent, but on the journey she felt rather homesick, so the dragon at once appeared and took her home to her native village.

In one of the moral tales usually published to illustrate the little Taoist book entitled the *T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien* ('The Very Exalted One's Tractate of Rewards and Retributions'), a rich but brutal man was destroyed by a Scarlet Dragon, which entered his house during a thunderstorm and killed everyone in it, except his daughter-in-law, a pious young lady who had repeatedly warned him that his oppression of his poorer neighbours would prove his ruin.

The Dragon is mentioned in the Odes of the Shang Dynasty (1766-1122 B.C.) as a decoration on the banners of the princes attending the ancestral sacrifice ; and down to modern times, the word 'dragon' was habitually used to mean 'imperial.' The Emperor's face was the 'dragon face,' the Emperor's death was 'mounting on high upon a dragon' ; any person or thing of a majestic or awe-inspiring character was 'dragon-like.'

## DRAGONS AND MONSTERS

In the *Tao Têh Ching*, the much-discussed Taoist work which (whatever its real date) embodies many of the pure or original doctrines of Lao Tzû, the character Ch'ung used in Chapter XIII for 'court favour,' as an antithesis to 'disgrace' or dismissal from office, is a 'roof' with a 'dragon' under it, the idea being 'honourable dwelling,' perhaps even dwelling beneath the 'dragon-roof,' the Imperial Palace.

On 10th August, 1926, a contributor to the *Times* threw a good deal of light on the Eastern tradition of dragons in the following note on the large lizards still to be found in certain parts of the Malay Archipelago.

### 'Dragons.'

#### Monsters in the East Indies.

'Excitement and more often incredulity have been caused by rumours of the existence of "dragons" in the Dutch East Indies. But there is a basis, and a very substantial basis, of truth in these reports. In past geological periods lizards of 20 ft. and 30 ft. in length existed, and their smaller descendants are alive to-day. The "Kabra Goya" of Ceylon and the Banded Monitor of the East Indies both reach 9 ft. in length, and a specimen of the latter, 7 ft. 7 in. long, now resides in the Tortoise House in the Zoological Gardens at Regent's Park.

'But the Banded Monitor is insignificant compared to the giant lizard of the same genus, which has been known to a few zoologists and to a few Dutch officials and sportsmen since 1912. For many years rumours of a dragon which dwelt in caves in the interior of the island of Komodo, between the much larger islands of Flores and Sumbawa, in the Malay Archipelago, had been current. These creatures were said to attain the length of 30 ft., and to be extremely dangerous to man. Komodo is a useless island, very thinly inhabited,

rocky and treeless. It is separated from the larger islands by two dangerous straits, through which the tides run twice daily with a speed that sometimes reaches 18 knots. It has no good landing-place. Consequently, the dragons remained a traveller's tale.

'But in 1912 the Dutch naturalist Ouwens published in the journal of the famous Botanical Gardens of Buitenzorg, in Java, a modest account of a monstrous lizard reaching seven metres in length, which—should it prove to be a new species—he tentatively named *Varanus komodensis*! Never was an amazing zoological discovery more unobtrusively announced. Ouwens' story was a simple narration of facts. Two Dutchmen, one an official from Flores, had visited Komodo, had shot small dragons, and vouched for the existence of much larger specimens. A collector from Java had followed and killed one, 9 ft. in length, besides capturing two babies a little over 3 ft. long, which may have grown into the two eight-footers seen in captivity by Mr. Alan Cobham during his flight to Australia. The skin of a 7 ft. specimen was sent to the Natural History Museum at Leyden.

'The Great War diverted the minds of most zoologists from reptilian dragons. Now the Komodo giants are threatened by an American scientific expedition. In the meantime more specimens have been shot, one of 13 ft. in length, twenty-footers have been seen, and much information has been obtained as to the habits of *Varanus komodensis*, Ouwens. No giants have been shot, for the good reason that the natives take no risks in assisting the sportsman. One cannot blame them when one reads the evidence that these reptiles sometimes run down and kill the half-wild island ponies, and that if they have been seen to fight one another over dead wild boars, they at times go about in parties—or should one write "assemblies"

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in the case of such imposing beasts. Their long yellow tongues, the scalloped crest on their croups and tails, and their habit of retiring for the night into holes and caves are all in accordance with the best mediaeval tradition as to the appearance and habits of dragons.

‘Monitor lizards of the genus *Varanus* of any size are dangerous. They use their powerful tails as a lashing weapon, and can easily break a man’s legs with a blow. They are very swift, and deliver a terrific crushing bite, besides using their formidable claws. Most professional hunters who know these creatures prefer to catch crocodiles rather than these large lizards. Monitors of 4 ft. in length will swallow several rats whole, and the strength and appetite of the Komodo dragons make them formidable to big game. Their tenacity of life would seem to be considerable, to judge from the following story. During the Great War two German collectors in the East Indies visited Komodo in a Malay sailing boat, and were lucky enough to kill a sixteen-footer, which they joyfully conveyed, presumably lashed to a pole, to the shore. But “once on board the lugger” the dragon revived, burst its bonds, capsized the boat, well nigh drowning its crew, and vanished in the sea.

‘The authorities at the Zoo and the South Kensington Natural History Museum are naturally awaiting the report of the American Expedition with much interest. But it is to be hoped that the Dutch authorities will take steps to prevent dragon-slaying becoming a pastime. These remarkable creatures are believed only to occur at Komodo, which is no larger than the Isle of Man, and at Labuan Batjo, on the western extremity of Flores. Komodo is apparently a useless island, except as a fishing base, and the dragons have, it is said, left the coast of late years. It would be a thousand pities if they were killed off by sportsmen in

search of the thrill which a really dangerous quarry provides.'

In Miss Juliet Bredon's *Peking*, we find several curious popular beliefs, illustrating the dragon-myth, which that painstaking lady picked up in out-of-the-way temples and odd places in which the foreigner would not take much interest, as a rule. For example :

The sword of the popular deity Kuan Ti was called 'Blue Dragon,' and he is related to have struck a rock with it, and caused a rill of water to gush out, at which he quenched his thirst.

The hill called Lu Shih Shan has upon it a monastery stated to have been founded by the monk Lu, in the sixth century A.D. One day he met two little boys, who served him diligently. It happened to be a season of great drought ; and while the monk prayed for rain on behalf of the people, these two boys offered to answer his prayer. Whereupon, to his amazement, they both jumped down a well and became dragons, while an abundant shower of rain descended upon the dried-up country.

A small but quite well-known altar to these dragon-children stands close to the well in question.

On the site of the T'an Chêh Ssü, according to popular legend, there used to be a pond surrounded by a thousand Chih (a kind of oak-tree upon whose leaves silk-worms can be fed). In this pond lived two dragons ; but when the temple was built, the pond dried up, and the dragons turned into serpents called respectively, 'Ta Ch'ing' and 'Hsiao Ch'ing.'

The two snakes lived in a red lacquer box inscribed on the lid, 'Kings of Dragons, Guardians of the Law' ; but they were free to crawl about the altars and to leave the monastery precincts as they pleased, returning at the sounding of the evening bell. Of course, being dragons, they could change their size and shape.

On one occasion, the active-minded Emperor, Ch'ien Lung, visited the T'an Chêh Ssü and showed some doubt of their magical powers. No sooner was an irreverent remark out of his mouth than the smaller serpent began to grow before his eyes. Its tail remained on the altar, but its body uncoiled and uncoiled and rolled out through the gateway, down the valley and over the hill, the head making its way towards the Imperial Summer Palace.

The Emperor was convinced, and at once ordered the monks to perform a service, imploring the dragon's pardon. After a long series of incantations the creature shrank to its usual size, and the monks were rewarded with liberal offerings. The size of the monastery at that time may be imagined when we read that, though the Emperor gave a coin to everyone who presented himself, and that the distribution lasted from dawn to dusk on the appointed day, a procession whose end was not in sight stood, waiting for money, at nightfall.

A small snake, supposed to be the hero of this legend, is still shown to visitors, who are warned to behave respectfully in its presence.

Ch'ien Lung, on another occasion, spent a day at the Temple of Hei Lung T'an, on his return from a hunting expedition.

When he had rested and refreshed himself, he sent for a couple of officials and said to them. 'We desire to speak with the Hei Lung (black dragon). Inform him that such is Our pleasure!'

The two officials bowed low, hastened to the edge of the dragon's spring and said, 'It is now our duty to inform you that our Master the Emperor desires to see you.' As they finished speaking, a voice from the rock replied: 'Inform His Augustness that I shall be waiting to receive him.'

When the Emperor went to the edge of the water,



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spoke gracious words, and leaned down to receive the monster, a creature no longer than his arm came up out of the water and said; 'I am he whom you seek. What do you desire of me?' For a moment the Emperor was surprised, then he said, 'How strange! I had expected to see a mighty presence, something to strike awe and fear. But, behold! this is not a dragon—only a little creature of no account.'

Scarcely had the words left his lips than the little creature disappeared. The waters were troubled, and a rumbling voice thundered; 'Ha, was it anything like this that you expected?' And at that moment, from beneath the rocks, a mighty five-pointed claw appeared. It grew and grew until it reached the tree-tops, and spread like an evil hand over the Emperor and the multitude of dignitaries who surrounded him, standing motionless with awe. It grew until it reached the sky, and the shadow of the claw fell upon the temple and upon the hill above, and all the birds and insects were hushed as in the hush before a thunder-storm.

Then the Emperor bowed and made many apologies to the dragon, and little by little the Hei Lung was appeased: the claw shrank, and the sun shone again.

Ever since, no lack of respect has been shown to the dragon of Hei Lung T'an, and prayers and offerings for rain are frequently addressed to it.

Water-Demons occur very early in Chinese legend, whether in connection with dragons or otherwise. They seem to have more affinity to animals or savages than to evil spirits, so a few stories about them are given below.

A tale purporting to go back to the Hsia Period (2205-1766 B.C.), described a water-devil as big as a three-year old child, with red eyes, black skin, big

ears, and long arms with red claws. Even when fettered with ropes it managed to reach food.

This little sketch suggests a gibbon from the swampy forests of Malaya, or perhaps a savage jungle-Dyak.

Devils and monsters generally differ from man in stature, a feature which folklorists lay stress upon as evidence of the difference of race, so important to the growth of marvel-tales.

A statement attributed to Kuan Chung, a celebrated politician who died 645 B.C., treats of the denizens of marshes which have not been drained or interfered with for many years.

The creatures are shaped like men, and are less than a foot high. They wear yellow clothes and caps, and carry yellow umbrellas; they ride colts, and attain miraculous speeds on them. When called by name they can carry news a thousand miles' distance in a day.

The unaccountable way in which news travels through jungle country inhabited by illiterate savages has often been noticed by Europeans; but the diminutive size of these yellow goblins, and their yellow umbrellas, recall to mind the toadstools which figure so largely in Western fairy-lore.

A much more dreadful aquatic phantom is the sea-bonze. It is black, with a bald human head like a Buddhist monk, and may originally have been a bad tempered bull-seal or sea-lion of large size.

The Tzū Puh Yü tells how a Hang Chou sea-captain ran into a gale. A black vapour arose during the storm, and a man, quite black, with white lips and eyesockets, came up out of the sea, and settled upon the bows of the ship. He blew into the faces of the crew until ten out of thirteen became black. The mist and the spectre vanished, but the storm raged for days after, and the ten men whose faces were blackened were all lost overboard.

71 ( A river-monster with nine heads which overturns boats (possibly a hippopotamus) is mentioned in the history of the Chou Dynasty. The 'nine heads' may refer to the visible parts of a hippopotamus' head, while it swims under water.

The Fêng, generally called phoenix, is often mentioned in the form Fêng Huang, being the male and female of this wonderful bird, which is one of the four supernatural creatures (the Phoenix, the Unicorn, the Tortoise, and the Dragon). It is represented as a mixture of the peacock and the long-tailed East Asian pheasant, in gorgeous colours ; and it figures in very early legends as appearing at the court of virtuous monarchs to assure them of the favour of Heaven. In this way it encouraged the good conduct of Huang Ti (2697 B.C.), who taught his subjects the use of wooden, earthen, and metal vessels, and the construction of boats and wheeled carts ; invented a medium of currency ; edited a medical work ; and divided his country into provinces.

He also laid the foundations of the arts of music, mathematics, and astronomy, and instituted a calendar.

His first wife, the Empress Hsi Ling She, instructed the people in the art of rearing silkworms.

Huang Ti died at the age of 111 years ; and by all accounts, he certainly deserved the visit of a phoenix in consideration of his multifarious activities for the good of the Empire.

The Emperor Shun's reign is usually given as 2255 or 2256 to 2208 B.C.). Though a model sovereign, he was not such an encyclopaedic genius as Huang Ti ; but he was promoted, as a mere commoner, to imperial rank, and was approved, so the legend says, both by Heaven and by man. Phoenixes came and disported themselves in his palace when ceremonial music was played.

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Everything connected with the *Empress* is symbolised by the *phoenix*, but in an ode commemorating the Duke of Shao (died 1053 B.C.), another model ruler, the phoenixes of both sexes are compared, curiously enough, to the court of virtuous and disinterested officials who served the Duke.

The poet Li T'ai Po (A.D. 699-762) mourned over the past glories of the city of Nanking in an ode written upon 'the Terrace of the silver-crested Phoenixes'; and another poet wrote 'Where there is nothing precious, the phoenixes do not alight.'

The *male bird*, sometimes represented with three legs, which lives in the sun, is no doubt an idealised form of the earthly rooster whose voice puts all evil things of darkness to flight.

The Greeks sacrificed a cock to Aesculapius, a solar deity, patron of medicine and healing; and the cock has associations in later European folk-lore which are closely similar to Chinese belief.

The red comb of the bird connects it with red, the happy 'Yang' colour; also with fire.

Both in Swedish and Hungarian folk-lore, the fairies threaten that the 'red cock shall crow' over a dwelling—that is, that fire shall consume it. The same expression was used in the troublous days of the Anglo-Scottish border (*Border Ghost Stories*, by Mr. Howard Pease).

In China the eggs of fowls are considered not only very nourishing, but magically curative. To eat an egg on New Year's day is to absorb a supply of the 'soul' or enlivening principle of Heaven and Earth.

In olden times, a branch of peachwood and a cock were put up over the doors of all official buildings on New Year's Day, to keep off bad influences. Sometimes an actual rooster was slaughtered; at others a

painted cock, on a sheet of paper, was pasted above the entrance.

In the magical land of the Peach Tree Mountain, a peach tree stands whose branches spread over an area of three thousand Chinese miles. A gold cock, perched on the top of it, crows at dawn.

A weird bird was presented to the Emperor Yao (twenty-third century B.C.) by the king of a tributary state. This was a cock with two pupils in each eye, which crowed like a 'male phoenix.' It fed on a certain kind of jade, and drove away tigers, wolves, and other dangerous beasts. The creature was plentiful for some years; then it unaccountably disappeared, and not a single specimen was to be found anywhere. Hoping it would return, people carved wooden and metal images of it, and hung them before their doors; but in vain. This is the alleged reason why, at New Year, images or pictures of ordinary cocks are put up; but it is, of course, a later story, told to account for an ancient rite.

A very old custom in the state of Lu (*i.e.*, modern Shan Tung, the native land of Confucius), was to sacrifice a red cock to the sun; in other places, out of respect for their solar affinities, cocks were not killed, nor was the flesh of fowls eaten, from the first to the seventh day of the year.

The head of a cock, or blood from its comb, will cure sorcery, drive away evil, and arrest epidemics.

Mr. Harry R. Caldwell, in his *Blue Tiger* (1925), relates how he was endeavouring, in his missionary capacity, to negotiate between some Northern troops and Fukienese 'brigands' (or rather outlaws), and restore peace to a distracted district. The chief of the outlaws invited him to a banquet, and, with much solemnity, served him the comb of a beautifully cooked fowl. His neighbour at the table whispered to him, 'You are "crowned."' This is the greatest

token of confidence known among these people.' The negotiation, by the way, was successful.

Some of my readers may be interested to compare, with Chinese beliefs about cocks, the Gnostics' use of the Abraxas.

This was a gem of presumably magic potency, worn as a charm by the Greeks of the Gnostic sect during the second century A.D. The letters of its name were intended, say some authorities, to express the 365 days of the year ; and it was decorated with a human figure having the head and comb of a cock.

The Gnostic interpretation of it as symbolising 365 emanations of the Divine Pleroma, or 'fullness,' emphasises its distinctly solar characteristics.

We are told that the Gnostics, like the Confucians, looked to knowledge, rather than faith, as opening the way to salvation ; and that, like the Taoists, they regarded all life as an emanation of one essence. The solar cock they shared, of course, with the pre-Christian Greeks and other peoples.

In North China, a man who dies outside the Great Wall or otherwise at a distance from home has his coffin transported to his ancestral burial place, with a live cock, in a basket, on top of it. This cock, by its crowing, guides the soul, that it may follow the body, and no doubt exerts a useful 'Yang' influence as well.

In the Shih I Chi, we read that a present was sent from the principality of Chang Shan to the Emperor Hwuy, A.D. 291. It was a 'wounded soul bird' (if the name be translated into modern Chinese), somewhat of the shape of a fowl, but coloured like a pheasant.

The Emperor disliked its ill-omened name, but much admired its plumage. He did not wish to accept it, but a man who was considered a naturalist of repute told him what it was. In the Yellow Emperor's time (2697 B.C.), a creature of the leopard

species attacked a woman, mistaking her for another person, and after her burial a bird flew out of her tomb, crying that it was her 'wounded soul'; and this phenomenon occurred because she had been killed before her due time. Later on, whenever people died before the ordinance of fate had decreed their death, these soul-birds gathered in the fields and forests.

When the usurper Wang Mang (33 B.C.-A.D. 23) of the Han Period caused the death of many harmless people, flocks of these birds appeared, screaming piteously, and had to be driven off with bows and arrows. In A.D. 291 more bloodshed and trouble arose, and many of these birds were heard wailing; they were eventually chased away.

The writer is not aware of any Chinese bird whose mournful human cry might have given rise to this story; possibly its native jungle has been cleared and settled, and the creature has become extinct.

The domestic cock, who is generally a solar emblem and an enemy of black magic, is not incapable of ghostly tricks from time to time.

In a fifth century tale, some dare-devil students decided to pass the night in a haunted pavilion. In spite of the keeper's protests, they had supper there together; and after the meal, a hand playing a flute with five holes appeared in front of the place where they were sitting. They burst out laughing, and one of them cried, 'How can you handle the whole length of a flute with one hand?' The spectre replied, 'Do you think I have not enough fingers?' And another hand appeared with *several sets* of ten fingers on it! At this point, the young men drew their swords and hacked at the spectre; and they found that it was an old cock.

In the year A.D. 614, a certain Wang, who owned a celebrated magic mirror, was staying in a distant

province with a man called Chang. Chang's daughter had been ill over a year with a malady which made her utter piteous cries at night, although her days were fairly comfortable. Wang, hearing her cries one night, went into her room, and let his mirror flash light upon her. Whereupon she cried out, 'He with the comb is murdered!' and there, under her bed, lay a large cock, quite dead, which had been in her father's farmyard for seven or eight years.

The *tiger*, though a real animal, is the subject of a vast amount of superstitious dread, whether in his actual ferocious person, as a man-tiger of mighty strength and cunning, or a symbol.

The first tiger, so say the astrologers, was a son of one of the stars of the Great Bear; and his descendants are lords of all the wild animals known to the Chinese. He is more fully endowed with Yin, that is, negative force, than any other four-footed beast; he lives to the age of a thousand years, and becomes quite white when he reaches the age of five hundred. The white Tiger presides over the western quarter of the Heavens, and ranks next to the Dragon in the hierarchy of symbolic beasts.

The tiger can seize spectres, rend them, and eat them up. A decoction of burnt or roasted tiger's skin is taken to avert misfortune; a tiger's claw, worn on the body, is a very efficacious charm.

In South Eastern China, images of the gods are often made sitting on a tiger-skin, or with a kilt or skirt of the fur. Pillows with ends roughly fashioned into the heads of tigers keep off nightmares; and children have little caps made in the semblance of tigers' heads—to protect them and give them Yin-influence.

Persons suffering from fever have even been told to read books about tigers and their supernatural powers, in order to exorcise the fever-demon!



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In the Western Hills, near Peking, are the ruined tombs of the Chin Emperors (a Tartar Dynasty, thirteenth century A.D.); they had been destroyed by the Mings, but were restored at great expense by K'ang Hsi, who regarded them as fellow-countrymen. He also gave permission to their direct descendants to worship at the Chin tombs.

On one occasion a young man of Chin descent was startled, while praying before the graves, by a tiger which stood watching him. 'Do not be afraid,' said the animal. 'I am deputed to guard these sepulchres. If you do not try to harm me, I will continue to protect you and your forefathers.' The young man then made obeisance to the tiger, and ordered his retainers not to molest it in any way.

It appears that, in North China, a certain mythical monster is believed to prowl about graves in order to eat the brains of the dead, and that tigers and pine trees are very obnoxious to it.

Early in the history of the ancient State of Wu, 'three days after the burial of the King the essence of the element "metal" appeared in the shape of a white tiger, crouching on top of the grave.'

The most famous tiger story of all is of a woman whom Confucius found in the forests of Lu; her father-in-law, husband, and son had been eaten by tigers. 'Why do you remain here?' asked the sage. 'Because the government is not oppressive,' replied the woman. 'Remember this, my children,' said Confucius, turning to his disciples, 'oppressive government is more terrible than tigers.'

The *celestial dog*, familiar to those interested in Japanese art and legend under the name of the 'Tengu,' is apparently a stellar personage.

In A.D. 514 a public panic prevailed owing to rumours that human blood and livers were being

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procured as food for the 'celestial dog.' A similar panic arose in A.D. 539, and lasted several months, during which people barricaded their doors at sunset and kept guard with clubs in their hands.

Ssü Ma Ch'ien (born 163 B.C.), the famous historian, writes of a large, moving star, which makes a noise when it reaches the earth; it is like a huge fiery dog; its yellow light is visible for many miles; it can destroy armies and kill the commanders.

In the *Shan Hai Ching*, we read of a red dog, called the celestial dog, in the centre of a large desert. Wherever it descends, it is a portent of armed violence.

The craving of this star-demon for human blood and livers may be connected with the notion that the liver is the organ of courage; and that the stellar dog either provokes bloodshed, or produces panic—(steals the courage of human beings).

The Japanese Tengu, whose name is written with the Chinese characters for a 'celestial dog,' is depicted either as a bird or a human being with a huge beak. It dwells in forests, and is associated with Mara's Buddhist devil-hosts; and an ostrich egg brought by the Dutch to Nagasaki in the eighteenth century was assumed by the populace to be the egg of a tengu. Its connection with the stars, or with a dog, is so slight that other legends have evidently over-shadowed its origin.

The belief that dogs can see spirits, and that when they bark unaccountably spectres are about, is common to China, Persia, Europe, and probably other places.

In the history of olden times written by Ssü Ma Ch'ien, we read that the ruler, Têh of Ch'in, in 676 B.C., slaughtered dogs at the four gates of the city, as a precaution against spectral poisons.

Some writers say that the sacrifice of dogs and the smearing of their blood in conspicuous places will

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warn dog-devils and other spectres of their fate, if they dare to meddle with human affairs.

The blood and other parts of a dog, prepared in various ways, figure in Chinese medical magic, and the age of the practice may be imagined when we read in the *Tao Têh Ching* that straw dogs were used in sacrifice—no doubt in place of an older custom of offering up real ones.

The patience of the beatified Catholic martyr, Father Perboyre (died 1840), was attributed to magical immunity from torture, and his judges had dogs' blood given him to drink, to deprive him of the supposed spectral protection from pain.

The *carp* is associated with the dragon. It is often kept in temple-ponds, where it attains a great age, and pious Buddhists buy food to throw to it.

The carp leaping up a waterfall symbolises a youth surmounting obstacles and pursuing a successful career. This legend is also very popular in Japan.

A Taoist Hsien, Tzū Ying, once caught a red carp, and was so pleased with its beautiful colour that he kept it in a pond and fed it. After about a year it was ten feet long, and had horns and feelers. One day Tzū Ying, realising that this huge fish was a sign from the gods, knelt down by the pond and made obeisance to it. The fish thereupon told him that it had been sent to take him up to Heaven. At once rain fell, and Tzū Ying sailed up into the clouds on the back of the carp. Evidently the carp had been a rain-dragon in disguise.

The *tortoise* is one of the supernaturally or spiritually endowed creatures, and is thus associated with the dragon, and the unicorn, the phoenix and the tiger.

As the 'dragon-horse' in the ancient legend arose from the Yellow River with mystic diagrams on its

back, so a tortoise exhibited to the Great Yü, while engaged in his heroic struggle with the floods, the marks upon its shell, which he interpreted as the basis of a system of philosophy.

One of the stars in the Great Bear is associated with the spiritual tortoise; another story makes the tortoise the descendant of the 'Original' or 'First Dragon.' The shell of the creature was used for the purpose of divination from very early times; it was scorched with fire, and the augurs drew their conclusions from the shape of the cracks.

Great longevity and powers of transformation are attributed to the tortoise in various legends. A certain river-god of enormous strength is represented in the form of this creature; and it is often sculptured in stone, of great size, with a huge monumental tablet on its back.

When a rebellion under Kung Kung occurred, in the misty times of Fu Hsi (2850 B.C.), the effect upon earth and heaven was comparable to the havoc wrought by the Titans in their war with the Gods in Greek Legend.

Nü Kua, a demi-goddess who is sometimes represented as partly a serpent, melted stones of five colours to repair the injuries done to the vault of heaven by Kung Kung, and used the feet of tortoises to set upright the four corners of the earth.

The curved upper shell of the tortoise has been compared to the heavens, and the flat lower shell to the earth.

A favourite Buddhist parable tells of a blind tortoise which lives at the bottom of the sea, whose eye is in the middle of its lower plate. Once every three thousand years it rises to the surface; and there, *if* it finds a plank with a hole in it, and *if* it rests on the plank with its abdominal eye over the hole, and *if* the waves turn the tortoise and the plank upside down,

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the creature will see the sun ! In other words, the most improbable event in the world is more likely to happen, than that tortoise is to see the sun.

In spite of its associations with history and religious fable, however, the tortoise, or rather a creature more of the turtle variety, is sometimes eaten.

A certain Dr. Ku was excessively fond of it, and any fisherman who caught a turtle was always able to sell it for a good price to the greedy Dr. Ku. One day he bought a specially fine one, and no doubt promised himself a succulent feast. The following night, however, a man in gilded armour appeared in a dream to Mrs. Li, his mother-in-law, and said : ' I am the third son of the river-spirit. Your son-in-law holds me in captivity. If you save my life, I will show you how grateful I am.'

In the morning Mrs. Li sent a messenger to tell Ku, but she was too late ; Ku's cook had already cut up the big turtle.

A little later, during that same year, the doctor's dog stood up on its hind legs like a human being and offered its master, in its forepaws, two bowls of water ; and then the forms of his ancestors were seen in the house, as it were painted on the walls. ' A very bad omen,' said the soothsayers. ' You must beware of fire ; the Yang is unduly predominant over the Yin.' Sure enough, in a little while Dr. Ku's library of books caught fire for no apparent reason, and was utterly destroyed.

A less widely-known monster is the Hou, stone effigies of which have been seen outside a temple near the Summer Palace of Peking.

In appearance they are a cross between a Mongolian wolf and a winged tiger, and they were once so active and fierce—being able to fly as well as run—that even tigers were afraid of them. They were, therefore,

## DRAGONS AND MONSTERS

compelled by the decree of Heaven always to look skywards.

Small effigies of them are sometimes executed in tile-work, and placed on roofs—most probably to scare away bad spirits.

The Suan-ni is a powerful and auspicious monster 'which resembles a short-haired tiger, and devours tigers and leopards' (Erh Ya). It is a kind of super-lion, and appears, carved in stone, in the avenues of effigies formerly erected before Imperial tombs.

The *thunder-spirit*, although a personage entrusted with the duty of killing very impious persons, is usually represented with a bird's beak and claws, and makes mistakes sometimes. The sound of thunder is produced upon the drums which he strikes with a hammer, and the lightning is sometimes pictured as a stream of flame coming from the hands of a female figure.

A Buddhist tale relates that a boy of fifteen, the son of a peasant, was once killed by lightning. His father made an offering to the thunder-spirit, and wrote out on yellow paper the following address, which he burned :

'Oh thunder-spirit, who would dare to offend you? Who could resist you? Nevertheless I beg to ask you, is it for an offence committed in this life that you have stricken a child of fifteen incapable of evil? If it is for an offence committed in a previous incarnation why was he granted this life? Oh thunder-spirit, what reply have you to make?' Suddenly a violent clap of thunder was heard, and the boy came back to life.

Powder made from 'thunder-stones' is firmly believed to be a remedy for spectral poisons in the system, particularly those affecting the digestive organs.

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

These stones are of black or veined blue stone, and are found some few feet below the ground in various parts of China. They mostly resemble axes and knives, and sometimes have two holes drilled in them. Most probably they are well-polished stone 'celts,' scrapers, axes, and other such weapons, unusually good specimens of which have been found in China by European archaeologists from time to time; and I believe that the superstition connecting them with thunder is found in Europe, where such articles have long been a subject of conjecture and research.

The unbelieving Wang Ch'ung explains thunder and lightning as 'exploding solar fluid,' the hot principle of Yang coming in contact with the clouds of water-vapour which are Yin, and causing an explosion. He utterly condemns the popular idea that death by lightning is a direct result of the anger of Heaven, because Heaven strikes trees and houses, as well as men, by lightning.

The Pi Fang bird is mentioned in the Shan Hai Ching as resembling a crane with one leg and one wing, green and red plumage, and a white beak. It is associated with the spirit of *wood*, carries fire in its mouth, and is an omen portending fire in any house in which it appears.

It formed part of the procession of ghosts and monsters which Huang Ti assembled on Mount T'ai, a hill, sacred from immemorial antiquity, situated in Northern China.

It is possible that this assembly, like the army of birds and beasts which fought for the same Emperor, was an 'international' pilgrimage of non-Chinese chiefs, designated by their totems, who accompanied the Son of Heaven on his pious mission.

An unaccountable tale is told in the *Tzŭ Pub Yü* of the *Celestial stag*, which lives in underground mines,

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and guides the workmen to the veins of gold and silver. If these creatures are hauled up into the daylight, they change into an offensively-smelling liquid, which deals pestilence and death around. If the miners refuse to haul them up (apparently they can speak, and are anxious to get out), the 'stags' molest the miners, and have to be overpowered, immured in the mine, and firmly embedded in clay. Where the 'stags' outnumber the miners, they sometimes torment the men and cause their death.

The Chinese writer of this legend classifies these monsters with corpse-demons, or ghouls that feed on the dead; and it may be that the word used for 'stag' in modern Chinese is merely an imitation of a local or foreign name for the mine-devils.

On the other hand, a 'celestial stag' is sometimes carved on gravestones (a practice which had been in existence over 2000 years), together with another mythical animal, of which very few details are available.

Mining has never been seriously undertaken in China at any great depth, for fear of angering earth-spirits; otherwise a few more stories might have been available, to throw light upon the subject. In Cornwall and in Germany, mines are associated with uncanny happenings of various kinds, possibly because of the dark, dangerous work and the utterly unaccountable noises heard below ground at times.

The *magpie* was at one time credited with knowing the future, and a certain kind of monkey (which possibly, for an animal, has a fairly good memory) with knowing the past.

A *monthly plant* was formerly believed to grow by the steps to the side-buildings of the Imperial Palace. On the first day of the month one capsule would come out; on the second, two; and so on, up to fifteen.



On the sixteenth one capsule fell off ; on the seventeenth, two ; and by the thirtieth all would have disappeared from the plant. This process took place every month, for the Emperor's convenience. Pan Ku (died A.D. 92), who was an eminent historian and a philosophical writer, seems to have believed in the existence of this plant.

A 'sensitive plant' is mentioned in the Historical Classic which closed and bent down its leaves in the presence of cunning, wicked officials and other functionaries who had evil intentions in their minds. The sceptic Wang Ch'ung says that because the plant moved when touched, a wise man started the story that it magically scented out evil-doers, in the public interest ; a shrewd touch, not without its value in appraising some other stories which appear in this collection.

The *hare* is derived, in popular lore, from the vital essence of the moon ; and a very old legend mentions the 'precious' or 'jade-like' hare, who lives in the moon and there pounds, in a magic mortar, the drugs which compose the elixir of life.

The ordinary, earthly hare is supposed to live for 1000 years, and to become white in its old age.

Buddha, in one of his former lives, was fed with the flesh of a hare which leapt into a fire for that purpose, and he rewarded the animal by sending it to the moon.

We have noted in a former chapter that in the West of England, and in certain parts of Scotland and Ireland, it is not considered lucky to eat the flesh of the hare ; nor even, in some places, for a hare to cross one's path if one is on any important business. A tale of a were-hare, who was really an old peasant-woman of the S.W. of England, was told to the writer ; but beyond the fact that her fellow villagers firmly believed

her to be capable of turning into a hare at will, the details were not of any particular significance.

Among monsters, one is tempted to include such things as the images of Kuan Yin with several heads and extra pairs of arms ; the Buddhist hermit Ta-Mo (Bodhi-Dharma), represented as a legless figure in consequence of many years' immobility during meditation ; devils with the heads of oxen and horses ; and other Buddhist symbols of this kind.

The clumsy handling of legends such as these, however, is Indian, and not Chinese. The multiplication of heads and limbs was intended to show the various powers and virtues of the ' gods ' to the peoples of India ; to a congeries of races, some of which were of a low type, to whom carvings, pictures, and especially writing became known centuries later than they did to the Chinese.

Indian graphic art often paid more attention to the details of anatomy ; the Indian craftsman saw things as a realist, and superposed his legend by simple, but undignified devices which left nothing to the imagination. The Chinese, on the other hand, though mostly a good draughtsman, often fell just short of genius through an anatomical blunder in an otherwise impressive, even masterly composition. His impossible dragon almost writhed before one's eyes ; his pine tree crouched beneath the lash of the typhoon ; his mis-shapen sage, riding upon a most improbable cow, nevertheless imparted mystery to the mountain landscape, and breathed an atmosphere of wise simplicity.

The Chinese thought of the legend first ; then of the rhythm and vigour of the drawing ; then of the composition of the picture. If anatomy had to be outraged, it was done with a firm, if whimsical hand ; it was not merely a matter of sticking-on a few extra limbs.

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The impulse of early Buddhism, in its 'missionary' days, produced religious pictures and statues in which successive non-Indian influences are clearly visible. The scientific accuracy of Greek art marked the school of Gandhara (now Afghanistan, the Kandahar district); then came a Persian element of prettiness, a Persian love of bright but delicately-used colour, with a tendency to overcrowding and minuteness. Into this compound of clumsy allegory and utterly unspiritual beauty, were infused, little by little, the Chinese boldness of line, combined with severity of composition. The hieratic displaced the luxurious; the earnest recluse ousted the leering *devi* (fairy).

When fervour declined, and images came to be made in factories, of cheap, gaudily-coloured materials, the work degenerated into lifelessness and ugliness. Now and again, in the South or the South East of China, a Kuan Yin is made or restored with something of the dignity of early times; but it must be confessed that these are exceptional cases.

Monsters and creatures of 'ominous' appearance were believed to appear, as we have seen, by way of presages or warnings from the gods. The interpretation of such signs and portents will be discussed in the next chapter, in the form of a sketch of Chinese Divination and Magic.

## VII

### DIVINATION AND MAGIC

LEGEND has it that the first human or only half-divine Emperor, Fuh Hsi, reigned from about 2852 B.C. to 2738 B.C. He taught his people hunting, fishing, and the care of flocks and herds.

One day he saw arise from the waters of the Huang-Ho (Yellow River), a 'dragon-horse,' on whose back were visible certain mystic diagrams. These marks were interpreted as arithmetical symbols of the working of the Universe. A chieftain, afterwards known to fame as Wên Wang (1231-1135 B.C.), the virtual founder of the Chou Dynasty, was treacherously cast into prison and kept there for two years by the last and most wicked emperor of the House of Yin; and while in captivity Wên, having pondered and studied the mystic diagrams and the existing efforts to explain them, composed the celebrated *I Ching* or 'Sacred Classic of Permutations,' generally called 'The Book of Changes.'









The *I Ching* is the oldest, most venerated, and least intelligible book in the Chinese language, and no native or foreign commentator has yet produced a satisfactory explanation of it. To this day it is the augur's and fortune-teller's final and unimpeachable authority—doubtless on account of its impenetrable obscurity.

The Eight Diagrams consist of eight sets of short parallel lines, in sets of three; some of the lines being unbroken, and others having a small gap in the

middle. The unbroken lines are Yang, the broken ones are Yin. The set of three refers to the Three Powers of Nature—Heaven, Earth and Man; man, be it noted, appearing in this very early traditional triad as a creature above and apart from the animal kingdom, in contradiction to the animistic view of living things as being all alike, and to the Buddhist doctrines imported later from India. Each set of three lines is shown in eight combinations of whole or broken lines; which eight trigrams or three-line figures are reducible to the Four Symbols (sets of two lines only), embodying the two Primary Forms (viz. Yang and Yin) of the One or Ultimate Principle of Creation.

The Four Symbols refer respectively to the Sun, the Moon, the Stars and the Planets.

The Eight Diagrams are stated—on what grounds no living man can tell—to symbolise the following :

Diagram No. 1;	Heaven and the South	
„	2: Vapour	„ South-East 
„	3: Fire	„ East 
„	4: Thunder	„ North-East 
„	5: Wind	„ South-West 
„	6: Water	„ West 
„	7: Mountains	„ North-West 
„	8: Earth	„ North 

Later commentators connect No. 1 with the North-West, No. 2 with the West, No. 3 with the South, No. 4 with the East, No. 5 with the South-East, No. 6 with the North, No. 7 with the North-East, and No. 8 with the South-West.

From the diverse and intricate workings of the Yang and the Yin a whole system of the universe is held to be traceable in these eight diagrams; and by doubling

the number of lines in each figure, sixty-four hexagrams can be set out. These again have been recombined in such a way that upwards of sixteen million permutations are claimed to be possible, all derived from the unbroken 'Yang,' and the broken 'Yin' lines.

The use generally made of this misplaced arithmetical ingenuity is for the purpose of fortune-telling.

A Chinese soothsayer's outfit in certain parts of the country comprises (a) fifty stalks of the milfoil (*ptarmica sibirica*), a plant which has apparently been held to possess magic qualities since a very early date ; (b) six small wooden blocks, to represent the hexagrams.

When consulted, the diviner takes one stalk and sets it in a holder in the centre of the table.

This symbolises The Great Ultimate, the One or Original Principle.

He then lifts the remaining forty-nine above his head, and divides them at random into two handfuls. The *right* hand bunch is placed on the table, and one stick out of it is removed and inserted between the fourth and fifth fingers of the *left* hand. We have now three groups, to represent Heaven, Earth and Man. The left-hand group is then counted into eights, and the remainder will yield the lower trigram of the answer desired. The right-hand group is then divided into eights, and the upper trigram determined.

Having now the upper and the lower trigram, the hexagram to be represented is identified, and a fresh count in sixes defines a certain line in the hexagram. The mystic *I Ching* is then consulted, under the hexagram and line arrived at, and the significance of the result is announced to the eager enquirer.

This laborious process is practised far and wide throughout China, especially for the mystication of the poorer and less educated people ; and references to it are so numerous in ghost and bogie tales, that it has

been necessary to give an outline of one of the rituals of fortune-telling 'from the divining stalks.'

A less elaborate way of consulting the oracles is to shake a bamboo tube, containing fifty numbered sticks, until one drops out. The numbers refer to a numbered set of verses, inscribed on a temple wall or in a book, and somewhat ambiguously worded. The enquirer obtains what guidance he can from the verse bearing the number written on the stick shaken out of the tube.

A Mr. Wang, of Huei Chou, was about thirty years old, and as yet had no children. A celebrated fortune-teller warned him that he would run a great risk in the tenth month of that very year.

While on a business journey, within the time specified, he saw a woman jump into a river. He paid a fisherman ten dollars to rescue her, and asked her why she had tried to drown herself.

'My husband,' she replied, 'cultivates some land on lease. I sold a pig for him yesterday, to pay a debt, and I received spurious money for it. My husband ill-treated me and I threw myself into the water.'

Wang was sorry for her, and gave her enough money to pay her debt. The woman took the money to her husband, but he suspected her of having got it dishonestly; so she brought him to the inn, where Wang was lodging. He was in bed, asleep.

When she knocked at his door and said she had come to thank him, he said, 'You cannot see me now, it is very late, and I am in bed.'

'My husband is here also,' she cried.

So Wang got up, and went to open the door. Immediately the bedroom wall fell in and crushed the bed he had just left. Wang had escaped the danger foretold by the fortune-teller. Thus, says the narrator, does Heaven protect honest, good-hearted people.

## DIVINATION AND MAGIC

When he reached home, he told the fortune-teller of his adventure.

‘You are a new man, now,’ said the diviner. ‘Your troubles have passed away, and every kind of good fortune is at hand.’

Wang then had three sons in succession, two of whom became graduates, and he lived to a great age.

On the discovery and driving away of demons by divination, a number of curious tales are told.

The sceptic, Wang Ch’ung, in his celebrated work, *Lun Hêng* (first century A.D.), mentions two brothers, Shên T’u and Yü Lǔ, who lived in the mountains of Tu Shoh, in the Eastern Sea. Standing beneath a peach tree, they used to examine numbers of spectres; and those which had maliciously injured human beings were bound with cords made of reeds, and thrown to a tiger. This is the alleged reason why officials formerly had human images cut out of peach-wood and affixed beside doors, and painted pictures of tigers hung on their gate posts.

There is no part of the peach tree, fruit, branch, or trunk, which does not figure in Chinese books of medicine or magic as a remedy for diseases caused by spectres; and the red blossom of the peach, being of a Yang or solar colour, is, on that ground alone, of good omen.

Peachwood stalks, planted in the earth, are supposed to protect a house or courtyard from demons; and water in which these stalks have been soaked is a remedy for gastric disorder.

The use of more than one rod, by the device of tying the magical twigs into a bundle, may be the reason why Chinese spectres of every rank have a perfect dread of brooms.

So far as disease-devils are concerned, mere material sunlight and ordinary sweeping away of dirt would



have real efficacy, quite apart from any symbolism or ritual ; but unfortunately the actual remedy is only too often neglected, while the make-believe is taken as seriously as a religious service. Drums and fire-works, fierce masks and red garments, peach twigs and rush ropes are more mysterious, exciting, and impressive than mere sanitation ; and brooms are relegated to the performance of such occasional services as the chastising of vampires, and the pushing of imaginary devils out of doors, leaving the disease-breeding dirt inside the house.

A curious repugnance to sharpening a knife over a well is mentioned by Wang Ch'ung. One might expect to hear that people disliked contaminating the well-water with filings or dust, or that they dreaded losing the knife by dropping it down the well.

The explanation given, however, is entirely unconnected with either of these ideas. Wang Ch'ung explains that the written character for 'capital punishment,' if analysed, consists of the characters 'knife' and 'well' in combination ; so that anyone who brings a knife to a well forms the ominous character 'capital punishment' by so doing !

As mentioned elsewhere, the attempts of Chinese and foreign scholars to explain written characters by 'taking them to pieces' sometimes lead them astray. The ancient system of writing which present-day Chinese script has superseded is being carefully studied, and a number of traditional 'interpretations' of modern characters have been abandoned in consequence.

Magical or enchanted *swords* are common to all peoples acquainted with metal weapons.

Odysseus had one ; so had King Arthur ; so had the prince in a Hungarian fairy tale (a rusty old iron blade) ; so had 'the mighty Mahmoud, the

victorious lord,' referred to in the Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.

In the earliest times, iron was apparently extracted from magnetic iron-ore. The metal was comparatively pure, and easily obtained; and its magnetic properties would naturally invest it with a mysterious value. It will be remembered that enchanted swords were often held in the earth by a supernatural force which only relaxed when the right hero or demigod grasped the hilt; possibly a garbled version of the magnetic properties of the metal.

The Greek chieftains of Homeric times used to present one another with pieces of iron, as something rare and precious; and there is reason for believing that the metal came from some district east of the Mediterranean.

It is remarkable how similar in form were the most ancient Keltic and Chinese swords—both in bronze and iron; they were short, straight, tapering and double-edged. European witches had the same dread of iron as the phantoms of Chinese folk-lore; and as F. Hirth, in his *Ancient History of China*, quotes the remarks of Pliny on the excellence of Chinese iron, the westward drift of other things besides weapons may very well account for certain striking coincidences in the folk-lore and art-motives of the Kelts and the Chinese, long before the Mongol invasions of the Middle Ages.

One cannot overlook, either, the conflicts which must have taken place between bronze-using and iron-using peoples, in the Far East as elsewhere; the man with the weapon of iron was a strong 'devil-queller' with a magically-tough weapon, prevailing over people of alien race and lower culture.

Christian knights-errant had a profound veneration for their swords; they gave them names, decorated them with religious symbols, and sometimes, when

vanquished by a base or unworthy foe, broke them so that they should not fall into bad hands. The Samurai of Japan almost worshipped their Katana, or battle-sabres ; and a magic sword —of Taoist origin— forms part of the Imperial Regalia of the Island Empire.

In China, the magic sword of the exorcist or demon-queller takes many forms.

Two thousand years ago, the River I contained monsters having the shape of a human knee, and possessing sharp claws. (Possibly an octopus, or a stinging jelly fish.) By imperial order, a 'metal' sword was thrown into the stream, so that the creatures should no longer drag down bathers to destruction.

Unfortunately the Chinese word used, which now means 'gold,' was then a generic term for 'metal.' Since the days of Wu Ti (140 B.C.), gold has been the subject of much alchemistic and superstitious writing ; so perhaps the dagger, or sword, thrown into the I was of gold.

In these degenerate days, iron, peachwood, or willow-wood is often used for magic swords, but a very favourite type is one made by stringing coins on an iron rod with red string or thread. If possible, red cloth (being of the Yang or devil-scaring colour) should be wound around the hilt.

When Wu Wang was engaged in a warlike expedition against Chou, a storm raged and so darkened the heavens that men and horses became invisible. Wu brandished a 'yellow halberd' and addressed the storm in threatening terms, whereupon it subsided.

When Duke Yang of Lu (N. China) was at war, the sun went down in the midst of a battle, while the fighting was at its height. He beckoned the sun with his spear and it reascended some distance above the horizon.

The 'yellow' halberd may have been gilt (thereby partaking of the magic nature of gold), or it may have

帝江神圖



“River-Monster”



been a ceremonial weapon of yellowish jade, copied from a prehistoric model for the purpose of magic ; as we know, early stone axes, etc., received superstitious reverence in ancient China and other countries. The spear of Yang may have been a similar instrument.

During the T'ang period, a certain Taoist used to brandish a real iron sword, with much energy, over his patients. One day he accidentally cut a woman in half, while trying to expel a disease-devil. The family were naturally alarmed, but our hero quickly stuck the two halves together, uttered a spell, and ejected some water from his mouth over the wound ; and the good lady was cured at once !

The semi-mythical Emperor Fuh Hsi used to frighten away demons with a battle-axe, and a spell he actually used is handed down by tradition. The axe, originally a sharp stone lashed to a stick with sinews, is universally the predecessor of the sword as a weapon of offence ; and the reference to the axe, rather than the sword, is good evidence of the immense antiquity of the story.

Sometimes a magic sword is left by itself in a locked room, and a spell is pronounced by a Taoist adept, ordering the sword to slay the spectres. Next morning the door is unlocked, and behold, the floor is all stained with blood !

Willow wood is a very good material for magic swords. The word 'willow' is written with characters connected with the Spring, and with Yang ; and the tree itself seems to have been worshipped in several countries.

In a Hungarian fairy tale a magic wand is made of willow, and a Princess is transformed into a willow tree. In Japanese folk-lore a girl dies when a certain willow tree is cut down ; the Ainu of Northern Japan regard the willow as a human being, and make little

'trees' by partly peeling a willow-stick and leaving the shavings attached in a particular position, as an offering to the gods.

In Chinese poetry, the willow is symbolical of youth and love, and it is treated with exquisite taste in pictures, lacquer, and pottery.

A young lady of the Ming Period, kept apart by etiquette from her lover, once hung up a poem in a garden to which he had access; the ardent youth forthwith wrote a reply, showing that her arrow had not missed its mark. A rough version of these poems is annexed, and it will be noticed that the girl writes of herself as a willow :—

#### The Lass—

Who was it set the willow in the mere,  
Its silken tassels, toss'd in the breeze of Spring,  
Rippling the waters? Why, in its emerald sheen  
Was it not set beside the waters green?  
At what man's behest  
Shall it be planted where he deems it best?

#### The Lover—

I've heard the breeze of Spring  
Troubling the verdant lakelet, and the dance  
Of tender willow-fringes as they swing  
And move its crystal waters; well I know  
That hidden, far within yon scarlet portal,<sup>1</sup>  
Springs such a tree;  
Can it not feel the sorrows of a mortal?

The garden-house occupied by this gallant lover adjoined the inner, or ladies' garden, of the home of his beloved. That he was a man of means and taste is shown by his description of the house and garden which he had laid out :—

<sup>1</sup> 'Scarlet portal,' an idiom for the feminine apartments of a Chinese house. Red is typical of love and happiness.

## DIVINATION AND MAGIC

### A SCHOLAR PLANS HIS GARDEN HOUSE.

I grieve not a thousand pieces of gold to pay for my garden,  
But a good craftsman will hire, and bid him raise me a  
book-room

Fitly adorned, and backed by a garden of exquisite order,  
And, to the West, a hall for enjoying the scents of the  
evening.

Curved shall the railing be, that bounds the flowery borders,  
Choicest of scent shall the East wind steal and scatter beyond  
it ;

While the North wall shall shelter an arbour built for the  
springtime,

All embowered in flowers, of every colour and odour.

Here a spring gushes forth, and a stream shall wind to the  
fish-pond,

Thence to the gold-fish bowl, which shall stand in front of  
the garden ;

All along by the stream shall droop the delicate willows,  
Side by side shall the white and the rosy lotus give perfume.  
Here shall the passing clouds be viewed from a hall on the  
east side

Which the descending sun shall paint with the glories of  
ev'ning.

Rows of the flowering peach and dark bamboo shall be  
planted,

Scarlet railings shall lead to the Hall of the Blending of  
Perfumes ;

Rarest of plants and flowering grasses springing before it,  
Fair stone jars, adorned with blossoms, standing beside it ;  
Here, to the South, shall be set the Almond Flower Pavilion  
With the five colours bedecked, on pillars painted and  
graven.

Stones fantastical, piled to mimic a towering mountain  
Fancy shall people with birds, and the lurking beasts of the  
caverns.

Yielding not to the Spirits' and Fairies' Palace for beauty,  
Lo ! my garden shall seem an abode of the Blissful Im-  
mortals.

It is pleasant to relate that he eventually married the  
lady of the neighbouring garden.



## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

The importance of environment, the effect of hills and valleys on climate, crops, and the general welfare of the people is, no doubt, the foundation of Chinese *geomancy*. The pseudo-science of Fêng Shui, that is, 'wind and water,' unfortunately did not develop into physical geography or meteorology; it has remained in the lowly atmosphere of fortune-telling, and is a source of revenue to a number of half-educated quacks and humbugs.

Consequently, the site of a grave, or the position of a garden-wall, is considered more important than the drainage of a compound, or the replanting of trees on a denuded hillside.

A very fair sample of the tactics of an expert in Fêng Shui is shown in the following account of a Taoist adept who tried to steal the luck of an influential family of the surname Li, in a certain district in the province of Fu Kien.

The family graveyard, which was on high ground, was generally believed to bring luck to the house of Li, and the jealous magician made a determined effort to appropriate some of their good fortune.

His daughter was dangerously ill and was not expected to live, so the rascal amputated a finger of the dying girl, put it in the hollowed-out horn of a ram, and secretly buried it in the Li graveyard.

From then onward, whenever a Li graduate died, a member of the Taoist's family passed an examination. Whatever yield the Li fields produced, the Taoist's fields produced more. People began to talk, but nobody could account for it.

A few years later, the villagers carried the image of the Local Guardian Spirit in procession, about the time of the Spring festival of Ch'ing Ming, the date at which family tombs are visited, repaired and adorned, and a good deal of outdoor festivity takes place.

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Now as soon as the image reached the Li graveyard, the bearers halted, and found they could not move any further. A young man became suddenly obsessed, and cried out, 'Back to the temple, all of you!' The villagers followed him back to the temple of the Local Guardian Spirit. He at once jumped upon the empty pedestal of the image (which was not in the temple, but on its way to the tombs), and said: 'I am the Guardian Spirit of this place. There is a charm buried in the Li graveyard. Take picks and ropes and follow me thither!' The multitude went in a body to the place indicated, and dug. They disinterred a ram's horn; inside it was a little snake, and on the outside of the horn were scratched the names of all the members of the Taoist's clan. 'Seize the head of the clan and take him before a magistrate!' yelled the young man.

The adept was tried, convicted of sorcery, and put to death. The prosperity of the Li family was restored, and they made generous offerings to the Guardian Spirit in gratitude for his assistance.

A few more details about Fêng Shui are given in the chapter specially allotted to it.

No reference to magic would be complete without a few tales about *mirrors*.

The power of a polished surface to show an exact image, especially of a human being, makes a strong appeal to the simple, animistic man.

The poetry and folk-lore of Europe are full of strange legends of mirrors. A country girl in Ireland was warned against undue vanity. She used her mirror a good deal, in spite of the warning, until one evening, instead of her own pretty face, she saw a hideous devil in her looking-glass.

Mirrors are often covered up in England during a thunderstorm, for fear of attracting the lightning

demon ; and the same thing is done while there is a corpse in the house. Some people are averse to leaving hand-mirrors face upwards at any time, no doubt for fear of their being cracked, and thus causing ill-luck.

To break a mirror, which has reflected human faces and forms, is very unlucky ; the fall of a picture—originally, of course, of a portrait or representation of a human person—is a bad omen for the same reason.

There is a pretty Japanese tale of a small farmer who bought his young wife a mirror. She was surprised and delighted to know that it reflected her face, and cherished her mirror above all her possessions. She gave birth to one daughter, and died young ; and the farmer put the mirror away in a press, where it lay for long years.

The daughter grew up the very image of her mother ; and one day, when she was almost a woman, her father took her aside, and told her of her mother, and of the mirror which had reflected her beauty. The girl was devoured with curiosity, unearthed the mirror from the old press, and looked into it.

‘Father!’ she cried, ‘See! Here is mother’s face!’

It was her own face she saw ; but her father said nothing.

The tears were streaming down his cheeks, and the words would not come.

The Buddhists believe that, immediately after death, the soul is confronted with a mirror in which it beholds all the deeds of its past life.

Mirrors exposed to moonlight often have drops of water on them, owing to condensation of vapour on the cold metal. These drops are supposed by the Chinese to come from the moon itself, and are esteemed for their magical virtues.

Chinese mirrors—apart from modern ones on the European pattern—are usually made of a particular

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type of bronze, and are circular. The backs are decorated with symbolic animals, the 'eight diagrams,' or lucky devices of different kinds. Sometimes the polishing of the reflecting face of the mirror has the effect of bringing out the almost imperceptible unevenness caused by the chasing or other ornamentation on the back: then, if a very strong light shines on the front, it reflects a faint copy of the devices worked upon the other side. This is, of course, held to be 'magical,' and adds much to the exorcising value of the mirror.

The mirror of Shintoism, so highly venerated in Japan, is really the demon-unmasking mirror of the Taoists adopted by the animistic religion of Old Japan as an emblem of sincerity and purity.

About the end of the fourth century A.D., a Mr. Yen Tsung built himself a new house.

One night he dreamed that a man came to him and said, 'Why have you spoiled my grave?'

So next day he dug up the ground in front of his bed and found a coffin. He set out the vessels of sacrifice on the spot, and addressed the spectre thus: 'As I must transfer you to a better place, I will prepare you a small grave elsewhere.'

Next morning a stranger came to his door, gave his name, and thus addressed Yen: 'I have dwelt here for forty years. Yesterday you treated me with great generosity, how can I reward you? To-day is one of good omen for the removal of my coffin from your premises. In this linen box I have golden mirrors, which I wish to bestow upon you.' Then the stranger took from a linen box which stood at the head of the coffin three golden mirrors, presented them to Yen and vanished.

To provide a proper resting-place for the dead is considered very meritorious, for the souls of those

unburied, or interred in a badly made coffin or unseemly grave suffer great discomfort. Similarly the Greeks feared the haunting of ghosts, in cases where the bodies—particularly after a violent death—were left unburied. This belief enters into several tales quoted in different parts of the present compilation.

The formidable sect, or secret association of the White Lotus, which organised a rebellion in Northern China in A.D. 1622, and was very hard to stamp out, is credited with magical practices in some popular tales.

A member of the society one day filled a basin with water, covered it over, and left it in charge of his disciple, saying, 'I am going away; guard the bowl well until I return.' The adept was long absent, and the disciple, out of curiosity, lifted the cloth and looked in the bowl. A tiny boat floated on the water, and was nearly wrecked when his finger touched it.

Suddenly in came his master, in a terrible rage, shouting, 'You nearly drowned me! I was far out at sea, and the ship I was travelling in well-nigh foundered!'

Another time, in the evening, the White Lotus magician lit a great candle, and charged his disciple not to let the wind blow it out in his absence. The disciple fell asleep about midnight; and when he awoke the candle had gone out. The master returned in great wrath, and cried out, 'I have had to travel more than ten li in absolute darkness!'

Later on, the same disciple tried to make love to his master's secondary wife, and his master told him to feed the pigs. No sooner did the unlucky offender enter the sties than he was turned into a pig. He never regained his human form, and was eventually sold to a butcher, killed and eaten.

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The lovers of Circe, in the Greek tale, no doubt came to some such ignominious end ; the moral is, in any case, the same.

Once upon a time, two great friends, Chang and Su, while on a business trip together, stayed at an inn at Kuang Hsin, province of Kiang Si. Su died rather suddenly in an upper room of the inn, and Chang went to buy him a coffin. The undertaker quoted two thousand cash, and Chang thought the bargain was struck, when an old man sitting near the counter said, 'That will be two thousand for the undertaker, and two thousand for me.'

'Oh, no, that's too much !' said Chang, returning to the inn.

That night, the corpse of Su rose up and attacked Chang so fiercely that he had to run away. Next day he went back to the undertaker's shop and offered three thousand cash. The shopkeeper made no reply, but the old man was still there, and said to Chang :

'They call me the Mountain Tiger. Unless you pay me two thousand and the shopkeeper two thousand you'll get no coffin !'

'Too dear,' said Chang ; but he was afraid to return to the inn, lest the corpse of Su should attack him again, and he wandered about until suddenly there appeared to him a long-bearded man, in a blue robe, who politely asked him : 'Is it you who have been unsuccessful in buying a coffin ?'

'Yes,' said Chang.

'Is it the Mountain Tiger who is the cause of the trouble ?'

'Yes.'

'And your friend's corpse has attacked you ?'

'Yes.'

'Take this,' said the stranger. 'It is the horsewhip with which the corpse of P'ing (a King of the Chou

Dynasty, died 719 B.C.), was beaten when it attacked a man. Go back to the inn. If the corpse molests you, thrash it lustily. You will obtain the coffin, and all will be well.'

Chang obeyed. Hardly had he entered the inn when the corpse came at him. He thrashed it until it fell down and lay without moving. The following morning he went to the coffin-shop, and the owner welcomed him with joy. 'You can have the coffin for two thousand cash,' he cried, 'we are rid of the Mountain Tiger! What a relief! That man's name was Hung, and he was a magician. He used to bewitch the bodies of the dead in order to extort money from the living. He screwed money out of everybody, and woe betide those who did not pay! They had ghosts and goblins in their houses! Last night, it appears, he died suddenly. I don't know the cause.'

'Let us go and see,' said Chang.

The body of Hung was found to be covered with bruises, as if it had been horsewhipped.

When Chang told the story of the old gentleman in blue, the villagers said, 'He was the Patron Genius of the District.'

A very well-known tale of magic, defeated by the bravery of a scholar, may be quoted here.

Some time between 1628 and 1644, the licentiate Yü, who was a good swordsman and boxer, went to Peking to sit for the examination for the degree of doctor. His servant suddenly fell very ill, and Yü sent for a magician. As soon as he saw Yü, he said, 'You want to consult me about your servant, no doubt, but you are yourself in much greater danger than he.'

Yü asked the man to tell his fortune, and the sooth-sayer, after going through the rite of divination, put

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on a sad face, and said, 'You have only three days to live.'

Yü was struck dumb with astonishment, so the soothsayer added: 'Of course I have a little charm, which would very likely save you. It will only cost you a hundred strings of cash.'

'If that is my fate,' replied Yü, 'no charm will alter it.'

'Very well,' said the soothsayer, 'you are not prepared to pay this small sum, but you may have reason to regret your decision.'

Yü's friends begged him to pay, but he would not hear of it.

The three days went by and nothing unpleasant occurred, but on the third night Yü closed his door, lit his lamp, drew his sword and waited. After sitting up to a very late hour, he began undressing, when suddenly he heard a slight rustling at a crack in the paper of his window. (Panels of paper in wooden frames are the usual windows of China.) A manikin armed with a spear wriggled through the crack, jumped down on to the floor, and at once grew to the height of a human being. Yü struck at him with his sword. The man jumped up in the air and tried to escape by the window, but Yü cut him down. He took the lamp over to look more closely at the remains, and found a little paper doll, in two pieces.

He now made no attempt to go to bed.

A second little devil came through the crack in the paper window, and when it was struck by the sword and cut in half, its body felt remarkably hard. On examination it proved to be a small clay image.

This time Yü sat down, sword in hand, by the window, watching the tear in the paper.

Presently a bellowing voice like that of a bull was heard, and a gigantic form pressed against the window-frame. The whole house shook, and Yü, who did



not want to be crushed if the roof should fall in, decided to go outside and attack the enemy.

He opened the door and found a giant, quite black, armed with a bow and arrows. The giant shot an arrow at him, which Yü parried with his sword. He dodged the sword, which pierced the wall of the house. Then the giant drew a sword, and Yü rushed back into the house. At one stroke the giant split the stone doorstep, so Yü again ran out between the giant's legs, and wounded him in the ankle. He then dodged a slash of the giant's sword, and buried his own in the creature's body. The monster fell and lay still; but Yü decided to take no risks, and began hacking the body to pieces. As he wielded his sword he felt as though he were cutting wood, so he fetched the lamp, and found lying in the courtyard a life-sized wooden statue of a man with a bow and quiver, from whose 'body' blood was flowing freely.

Nothing more happened that night.

Yü knew quite well that the fortune-teller had sent these magic figures to kill him, and thereby verify the prediction of his death within the three days. When Yü and his friends, however, set off together to catch the fortune-teller, he saw them coming and made himself invisible. But they knew he was somewhere in the place, and as the blood of a dog breaks all spells, they sacrificed a dog, and sprinkled its blood where he had just been sitting. The magician at once became visible; his face was stained with the blood of the dog and his eyes blazed with anger. He was seized and taken before a magistrate, who condemned him to death.

Kao Ming Ch'ing, as soon as he was married, began to suffer from dizziness and shortness of breath. Night after night he used to hear the cry, as it were, of a child being strangled. At last he saw a little creature, about

a foot high, dancing over the bed ; it always ran away in the same direction as soon as it was aware of being seen, and vanished. Meanwhile Kao was getting worse, and rapidly losing his strength. A soothsayer was consulted, but his charms were of no avail. Then Kao hid a sword under his pillow, and put a large basin of water in the part of the room to which the creature was in the habit of retreating. One afternoon, when Kao was taking his siesta, it appeared. Kao flourished his sword, the creature fled hastily, and fell into the basin of water. It was a wooden figure, dressed in red, with a red string tied tightly round its neck, as if to strangle it.

The figure was burned and Kao recovered his health. He learned later, that, on the day on which the figure was burnt, a carpenter died suddenly in the village. He had fitted up the bridal chamber, and Kao had upset him by refusing to pay all that he demanded. His revenge had been to hide in the bedroom a charm intended to tempt Kao to hang himself ; but the charm did not effect its purpose, and only injured the man who used it. In this, as in a tale quoted in an earlier chapter, ‘curses, like chickens, come home to roost.’

During the T'ang Period there stood, to the west of the city of K'ai Fêng Fu, an inn called the ‘Footbridge Tavern,’ kept by a woman about thirty years of age. No one knew who she was or whence she came, and she was known locally as ‘Mrs. Number Three.’ She was childless, had no relations, and was supposed to be a widow. It was a comfortable, roomy inn ; the hostess was in easy circumstances, and had a herd of very fine asses.

Besides this, she had a generous nature. If a traveller were short of money, she would reduce her prices, or board him for nothing ; so her inn was never empty.

Sometime between A.D. 806 and 820, a man called Chao Chi Ho, on his way to Lo Yang (which was then the capital city of China), stopped at the 'Foot-Bridge Tavern' for the night. There were six or seven guests there already, each of whom had a bed in a large sleeping apartment. Chao, the last arrival, had a bed allotted to him in a corner, against the wall of the hostess's bedroom. Mrs. Number Three treated him well, as she did all her guests. At bedtime she offered wine to each, and took a glass with them. Chao alone had none, as he did not generally drink wine. Quite late, when all the guests had gone to bed, the hostess retired to her room, shut the door and blew out the light.

The other guests were soon snoring peacefully, but Chao felt restless.

About midnight he heard the hostess moving things about in her room, and peeped through a crack in the wall. She lit a candle, and took out of a box an ox, a drover and a plough, little wooden models about six or seven inches high. She placed them near the hearth, on the beaten-clay floor of the room, took some water in her mouth, and sprayed it over the figures. Immediately they came to life. The drover goaded the ox, which drew the plough, back and forth, furrowing the floor over a space about equal to that of an ordinary mat. When the ploughing was done, she handed the drover a packet of buckwheat grains. He sowed them, and they at once began to sprout. In a few minutes they flowered, and then bore ripe grain. The drover gathered the grain, threshed it, and handed it to Mrs. Number Three, who made him grind it in a little mill. Then she put the drover, his ox and his plough—which had again become little wooden figures—back into their box and used the buckwheat to make cakes.

At cockcrow the guests arose and prepared to leave,

but the hostess said, 'You must not go without breakfast,' and set the buckwheat cakes before them.

Chao was very uneasy, so he thanked her and walked out of the inn. Looking over his shoulder he saw each guest, the moment he tasted the cakes, drop down on all fours and begin to bray. Each had turned into a fine strong donkey; and the hostess forthwith drove them into her stable, and took possession of their belongings.

Chao did not tell a soul about his adventure; but a month later, when his business in Lo Yang was finished, he returned, and stopped one evening at the 'Foot-Bridge Tavern.' He had with him some fresh buckwheat cakes, of the same size and shape as those made at the time of his former visit by Mrs. Number Three.

The inn happened to be empty, and she made him very comfortable. Before he went to bed, she asked him if he wished to order anything.

'Not to-night,' he replied, 'but I should like something to eat first thing in the morning, before I go.'

'You shall have a good meal,' said the hostess.

During the night, the usual magic growth of buckwheat took place, and the next morning she placed before Chao a dish of buckwheat cakes. While she was away for a few minutes, Chao took one of the magic cakes off the dish, replaced it by one of his own, and waited for her to return. When she came back, she said, 'You are not eating anything.'

'I was waiting for you,' he replied. 'I have some cakes. If you will not try one of mine, I shall not eat those you have given me.'

'Give me one,' said Mrs. Number Three.

Chao handed her the magic cake he had taken from the dish, and the moment she put her teeth into it she went down on all fours and began to bray. She had become a fine, strong she-ass.

Chao harnessed her, and rode home on her back, taking with him the box of wooden figures ; but as he did not know the spell, he was unable to make them move, or to turn other people into asses.

Mrs. Number Three was the strongest and most enduring donkey imaginable. She could travel 100 li a day on any road.

Four years later, Chao was riding her past a temple dedicated to Mount Hua, when an old man suddenly began clapping his hands and laughing, crying out, ' Now, Mrs. Number Three of the Foot-Bridge, what's happened to you, eh ? ' Then, seizing the bridle, he said to Chao, ' She has tried to do you a wrong, I grant, but she has performed sufficient penance for her sins. Let me now set her free ! ' Then he took the halter off her head, and immediately she shed the ass's skin and stood upright in human form. She saluted the old man and vanished. No one has ever heard of her since.

The exorcising value of salt is curiously described in a tale of North China, appearing in the *Tzū Puh Yü*.

A tall spectre, whose face seemed to be formed of a blackish vapour, haunted some old graves near the village of the Yin family. It came out suddenly at night, frightening passers-by and vanishing in a black, stinking fog. The road near those graves acquired such a bad name that people began to avoid using it after dark.

One night, however, a salt pedlar, being very drunk, forgot the warning and turned down the haunted road. The moon was high, and suddenly the spectre sprang forth, whistling and barring the way. The pedlar beat it with his carrying pole, but could not hurt it, so, in a sudden panic, he seized a handful of salt and threw it at the spectre. The thing recoiled, moved around him for a while, and sank into the ground.

The pedlar emptied out his baskets of salt on the place and went away. At daylight he returned, and found that his salt was all stained with blood, and emitted a rancid stench ; but no more hauntings occurred in that place.

A sick lady, in the T'ang Period, was ordered to eat the liver of a living dragon ; so a Taoist wrote a charm which of itself flew into the sky, and caused a dragon to descend into a jar of water. The liver was cut out and cured the patient.

The flesh of certain harmless lizards is said by travellers to be palatable and digestible, and the prescription mentioned in this tale may be founded upon the actual capture of a small flying lizard from the Malay Archipelago.

The *Tz'u Puh Yü* mentions that, in Peking, babies who cried overmuch were believed to be plagued by the influence of certain minor stars. A Wu, who was able to shoot these beings with a mulberry-wood bow and peachwood arrows, was accordingly in great request.

The Vice-President of one of the Boards had an old pensioner living in his house. She had been a secondary wife to his great grandfather, and was over ninety years of age. Day by day, the old Aunt, as she was called, would sit on the warm stove-bed or Kang (common in Northern Chinese houses) grave and silent, with no companion but her cat.

The Vice-President's baby cried incessantly at night, so he sent for the Wu. That worthy arrived with his bow, and an arrow to which was attached a white silk thread ; the other end of it was tied around his fourth finger.

He sat, quietly waiting, until midnight. Then, in the moonlight, he saw a shadow rapidly passing to and fro over the paper window-pane ; it was a woman over seven feet high, on horseback, armed with a long spear.

The Wu stretched out his arm, drew his bow, and let fly an arrow. The spectre moaned, threw down its spear and made off. Following the thread, and accompanied by a number of members of the household, he traced the spectre to the room occupied by the Old Aunt. The door was closed, and when the bystanders called out there was no answer; so they lighted torches and went in. A servant girl said, 'The Old Aunt has been wounded by an arrow,' and they saw that the aged crone had an arrow sticking in her shoulder. In her hand was a thin bamboo slip, and the cat was in her lap. The cat was destroyed, and the hag was deprived of food and drink, so that she soon died. The child's crying fits were at once completely cured.

Evidently, like our European witches, the old dame was in the habit of turning her cat into a magic horse and riding off on it at night to play her devilish pranks.

A gruesome tale is told of a Wu who bewitched a living girl, took out her heart, eyes, ears, and tongue, and dried and pulverised them. He kept these in a gourd, and made a paper effigy of the girl. Her ghost became his slave; and whenever the ghost disobeyed him, he punished the paper effigy, thereby inflicting pain on the ghost.

One night she appeared to a man of repute, told him to assemble ten witnesses, and narrated her sufferings, whereby the Wu was brought to justice, and eventually died in gaol.

The use of small effigies for harming other people is well known everywhere, and the Chinese method of using them only differs in matters of detail, and in the completeness of the literary records of witchcraft, from European and other practices of the kind.

A judge sitting in the extreme South of China is said

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to have tried a Wu who showed his magical powers in court during the proceedings. He put some meat on a dish, covered it up, and performed incantations over it. When the cover was lifted, the meat was seen to be overgrown with hair. 'What a vicious spectre,' says the narrator, 'must it have been, which could cause such things !'

Similar miracles have been related, we believe, of a certain hair-restorer which will be familiar by name to our readers.

Many varieties of written charms are used in China. Those intended for hanging upon doors or walls are usually painted on yellow paper ; others, for wearing about the person, are often inscribed upon strips of peach-wood.

If they are written in red (the Yang or solar colour), and still more if a mandarin's writing-brush is used in engrossing them, their strength is greatly enhanced. Besides being students of the sacred works of Confucius, mandarins derive their authority from the Son of Heaven, the Emperor, who can promote or degrade spirits as well as men.

Chinese writing having retained some of its pictorial qualities down to historic times, various fanciful symbols suggesting thunder, clouds, dragons, diagrams of constellations, and figures of demons or spirits are jumbled together by the cheap quacks who deal in such wares in order to impose upon the ordinary people ; few of whom, as we have noted, stay at school long enough to acquire more than a bowing acquaintance with a few characters, and a childlike reverence for writing of any kind.

Sometimes sentences in ordinary script are used, such as :—

'It is ordered that General Li Kuang (second century B.C.) shall shoot his arrows here.'



This Li Kuang was a great conqueror, whose campaigns in Central Asia were at first highly successful; he is believed to have subjugated certain tribes on the actual frontier of Persia. He was eventually invested with high honours by the Huns, with whom he threw in his lot after an abortive attempt to displace the reigning family of China in favour of his own.

‘This is an order to the Mysterious Maiden of the Nine Heavens to suppress murderous influences.’

The Sombre or Mysterious Maiden seems to have been a very early impersonation of some solar influence which aided the Emperor Huang Ti in his contest with rebellious powers. The beginning of history in many countries recounts a struggle between solar light and the darkness of the abyss. (Gods against Titans, for example.)

‘Deified Prince, ruling the years, take up thy position here.’

This stellar personage, the Planet Jupiter, corresponds to the western Zeus, the conqueror of the titanic (earthly or inferior) powers.

A character indicating the shouting of a crowd of people is also a highly popular charm. A multitude of living people brings together a large aggregate of Yang, or vital influence, which counteracts Yin or ghostly power; and—what is more to the purpose—it is decidedly preferable to face a ghost when one is one of a crowd, than alone and unaided!

The use of a tiger’s face or mask in decoration—so frequent not only in Chinese but in Persian and other designs—is believed to expel demons of fever and disease. The tiger is a royal beast of strongly Yin affinity; and the fact that it flourishes in hot, swampy jungles may have something to do with its efficacy as a charm against disease.

Witches and wizards are often represented in our old pictures with a dried lizard or crocodile conspicu-

ously displayed among their cauldrons, phials, and other apparatus. Similarly, in parts of China where the Malay flying tree-lizard is not found, the dried body of one of these creatures will be hung up near the sick, in order that the strange sight may impress the demon of disease with terror. In inland districts, the shell of a crab is considered sufficiently mysterious to frighten the local disease-devils.

Impressions taken from those seals which are so beautifully carved in hard stones by Chinese craftsmen, are more essential to a charm or to any other writing than the signature of a document is with us. 'A charm without a seal,' says a Taoist writer on magic, 'is like an army without a general.'

Ko Hung (fourth century A.D.), an arch-wizard and mystic writer of the Taoist school, describes a seal of Huang Ti which travellers in mountains and wild places impressed on the clay whenever they saw the tracks of tigers or wolves, to ward off their attacks. Even gods and devils of the mountains, who enjoyed blood-sacrifices, could be rendered powerless for evil if their path were obstructed by impressions of this magical seal.

In very ancient times a spectre in the form of a huge tortoise dwelt in the depths of the River of Rocks, and spread pestilence around. So clay impressions of the holy seal were cast into the waters, the tortoise came to the surface and was slain, and the plague abated.

A fever-quelling poem of considerable length and beauty of diction was actually written by Han Yü (A.D. 768-824). A politician, poet, and eminent Confucian philosopher, he was sufficiently an enemy of what he considered to be superstition to write a satire upon the public veneration paid by the Emperor to a supposed relic of Buddha. He was sent away to a frontier post in the extreme South, where he did much to civilise the local barbarians, and even delivered them

from a terrible monster of the crocodile type. He was eventually restored to the Imperial favour, and honoured with a posthumous title.

His poem, on all grounds, is considered a mighty charm against evil, but to us, it shows in every line that so great a Confucian as Han Yü was himself a convinced believer in magic.

The Dhâraṇi or brief Buddhist texts which the monks of that cult use as spells are intended not only to banish evil but to honour the Buddhas, the Law, and the Congregation of the Faithful, and to accumulate good 'Karma' in the interests of all creatures.

There is not space here to enlarge upon this phase of the subject, which is more of the nature of a religious than a magical usage.

It is often mentioned in books on China that a short disconnected wall, or a slab of stone, is erected in front of a doorway so that evil spirits, which fly in straight lines, may be unable to enter.

This wall is often inscribed, 'the stone dares to withstand.' It is erected in the most efficacious position under the advice of a geomancer, and sometimes has a tiger's head carved on it to increase its value as an obstacle to the approach of demons.

A very old writer says that in the State of Wu, stone men, or slabs inscribed 'this stone dares to bear (or withstand)' were set up in places where a street or lane opened directly opposite the door of a house, in order to avert evil. Another old tale mentions that the stone men were effigies of Shih Kan Tang, whose name means 'Stone daring to withstand' (period A.D. 936-943); but it looks as if the hero were invented to account for the stories, which must have commemorated a much earlier deity or customary rite.

The Greek Hermae, pillars with the head of a solar personage on them, were probably set up in the streets of Athens for a similar purpose.

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The jade tablets, which were formerly held in the hands of sovereigns and officials during sacrifices and court functions, are credited by tradition with mighty exorcising powers.

Jade is symbolical of Yang, and of every moral and physical excellence known to man. It is rather curious that the ancient name of the magical tablet of exorcising jade was believed to mean a 'hammer.' This not only recalls the hammer of the Norse god Thor, with which he defeated the dark powers, but leads one to conclude that the stone weapons used by prehistoric man as hammers, and occasionally unearthed in China, were imagined to be 'thunder-stones' or heavenly weapons, and that the jade objects in question were carried in commemoration of these mysterious *primaeval* hammer-heads.

The widely honoured Chung K'uei, one of the favourite devil-quellers of China—well known in Japan as Shoki—bears the same name as a jade amulet of remote antiquity, and has been so often mentioned in this book that some sketch of his history may be helpful. The legends of his origin do not hang together very well.

According to one version, Chung K'uei, whose real name was Yao Hsüan, was a doughty warrior and loyal servant of the Wei Dynasty, who died A.D. 495. Apparently, he did nothing in his life-time in the way of devil-quelling, apart from the fact that he was a straightforward, hard-fighting soldier, such as demons would naturally fear.

Another legend, of much later date, tells of a picture by the celebrated Wu Tao Tzū which hung in the Imperial Palace, representing a man named Chung K'uei. On the upper margin of the picture was an explanatory note of the T'ang Period.

It seems that the Emperor Ming Huang (early in the eighth century A.D.) had been away from the palace on

military affairs, and fell ill as soon as he returned to his Capital. His fever lasted over a month, and doctors and soothsayers were nonplussed. At last, one night, the Emperor dreamed of two spectres. The small one had the snout of a calf, and was dressed in red; one foot was shod and the other bare. Its second shoe hung from its belt, in which was stuck a fan. It snatched away the jade flute and embroidered scent-bag of the Emperor, and ran about, holding the articles in its hands. The tall spectre wore a hat and a dark-coloured garment; it had one arm bare, but both feet shod; it seized the small spectre, rent it to pieces, and devoured it.

‘Who are you?’ asked the Emperor.

‘I am Chung K’uei,’ replied the tall spectre. ‘I was a soldier who did not succeed in rising to a high rank; I have sworn to preserve Your Majesty from all the spectral evils in the world.’

The Emperor awoke. His fever had left him and he felt strong again. He called the painter Wu Tao Tzŭ and recounted his dream, saying, ‘Try now, and paint me the dream as I dreamed it.’

Wu Tao Tzŭ drew so vivid a picture of it that the Emperor cried, ‘You must have had the same dream yourself!’ and gave the painter a hundred gold coins.

The Emperor then wrote a proclamation to the effect that the powerful spirit of the loyal Chung K’uei deserved praise and reward, and that the authentic likeness of him, as visualised by Wu Tao Tzŭ, should be exhibited and made widely known; so that at the end of the year, when the demon-expelling ceremony fell due, it should be available for laying all evil ghosts and spectres.

Although different versions of this legend are extant, the modern pictures of Chung K’uei nearly always show him in the costume of the T’ang Period; and in the eleventh century we are expressly told that copies

and rubbings of his authentic portrait were multiplied, by Imperial Order, for exhibition at the exorcising ceremony on the last day of the year.

We are not surprised to hear that his picture often appears on almanacs which, of themselves, being solar records, are demon-quellers; nor that his beard is often coloured red. His whole figure is occasionally drawn in red ink or paint, red being the solar colour. A little blood from the comb of a cock is sometimes mixed with the red paint, to increase the magical powers of the picture. Chung K'uei's images are not often seen in temples, nor even in small shrines or 'chapels'; but countless thousands are hung in dwelling-houses, and especially in the bedrooms of fever patients, whose ravings about weird monsters naturally move their relatives to put a devil-expelling picture near them. Chung K'uei is sometimes seen on horseback, accompanying his younger sister on her bridal progress to the home of her husband—her sedan chair carried by captive goblins! This picture is based upon the legend of a lady named Chung K'uei (whose tomb was opened in the eleventh century) in which she was described as younger sister to a general of high renown under the then reigning Sung Dynasty.

We may close this chapter with a brief note showing the pitch to which the Chinese have carried their practice of grouping, in numerical categories, nearly everything in the Universe.

The *Li Chi* or *Classic of Ritual Observances* enumerates the Five Elements, viz. :

Wood, fire, earth, metal and water.

To these are equated five prehistoric emperors: T'ai Hao, Yen Ti, Huang Ti, Shao Hao, Chuan Hsü; five spirits, viz., Kou Mang, Chu Yung, Hou Tu, Ju Shou and Hsüan Ming.

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Five sacrifices, offered respectively in honour of the inner door, the hearth, the inner court, the outer door and the well.

Five domestic animals, the sheep, the fowl, the ox, the dog and the pig.

Five grains, or cultivated cereals, wheat, beans, panicked millet, hemp, and ordinary millet.

Five chief organs of the body, the spleen, the lungs, the heart (the most important), the liver, and the kidneys.

Five of the ten numerals, 8, 7, 5, 9 and 6.

Five colours, blue or green, red, yellow, white and black.

Five tastes, sour, bitter, sweet, acrid and salty.

Five points of the compass, East, South, Centre, West and North.

Five varieties of creatures, scaly, feathered, naked (*i.e.*, man), hairy and shell-covered.

There are also the five metals, five planets, five tones (in pronouncing Chinese), five classes of Taoist genii, and many more.

European alchemists and astrologers, and Greek, Arabian and Indian theorizers on natural philosophy were also addicted to numerical classifications, but did not carry it to the extreme noticeable in old Chinese writers.

The five fingers of one hand, and the ten fingers of both, are the natural means of counting ; while the idea of order in the Universe, and the ever-restless enquiry of man into the relation between himself and the rest of creation have done the rest. In fact, to the Buddhists and the neo-Confucian philosophers of the Sung Period, Law was as nearly as possible deified ; one can almost say that it was their idea of a Supreme God. The ' Law of Nature ' served much the same purpose in the writings of the materialistic scientists of Europe in the days of Huxley and Darwin.

## *DIVINATION AND MAGIC*

The respect for all records of the past has preserved, for the curious inquirer into things Chinese, a number of beliefs and practices which have disappeared elsewhere ; and it is perhaps as well, now, to say a few words upon another great conservative influence, viz., the practice of Ancestor-Worship.



## VIII

### ANCESTOR-WORSHIP

'THINGS are not as they used to be,' said the greybeard, with a mournful wag of the head.

'No,' replied his cynical friend, 'they *never were* !'

The greybeard's attitude of mind may be a cause, or an effect of ancestor-worship ; but, either way, it is typical of the Chinese view for a good many centuries past.

The conception of the Creator as Father of Mankind, and the wide privileges which were held and exercised in early times by earthly fathers are well-known, and can readily be understood. Further, when a human father has shuffled off his mortal coil, and has become a shadowy entity with unknown powers, his descendants may be expected to show him affectionate deference, not untinged with awe.

( It has been suggested that dreams about persons already dead were assumed by primitive man to be actual meetings and interviews with ghosts ; and that numerous funeral customs were inaugurated to make certain that the dead were well and truly dead, and would not haunt their former dwelling-places. Countries between which no communication was possible, or likely, shared the practice of passing corpses through a hole in the wall, or out of a window, instead of through the door of the house ; the survivors did not want the ghost to remember the way back to its earthly home. Sometimes the dying were carried into a special hut, where they passed away amid

incantations to keep off other ghosts and evil spirits ; sometimes the house in which a death had occurred was abandoned, and a new one built by the surviving members of the family. Up to the eighth century A.D., at the death of an Emperor of Japan the imperial residence was considered inauspicious, and his successor lived and ruled in a different building.

In these practices of isolating the dying and deserting a house which death has visited, one is tempted to discern a dim presage of sanitary science ; a reason for supposing that (superstitious fear was the fore-runner of hygiene,) as astrology was the basis of astronomy.

In the Odes collected, if not actually edited by Confucius, there are many references which show how early ancestral worship must have been inaugurated, and conducted with no little pomp, among the Chinese.

We read of millet grown upon the ground which their fathers had laboriously cleared of thorns and thistles, being used in the sacrifices ; of the flesh of unblemished sheep and oxen, boiled and placed upon stands ; of spirituous liquor, presumably distilled from grain ; of a relative of the deceased who, in ceremonial attire, is marshalled to a seat of honour to receive the sacrifices in the name of his dead ancestors. A ' priest '—perhaps a Wu or Shaman (animist wizard), perhaps a master of the ceremonies versed in the complicated ancestral ritual—announces that the ghosts have been satisfied with the fragrance of the offerings ; drums and bells are sounded, and a feast, of which the clan partake, follows, with considerable drinking and merriment. (Date, perhaps about 1000 B.C.)

Another Ode of about the same age tells of the unseen presence of ancestors, who bestow prosperity and longevity upon their descendants, in gratitude for the sacrifices.

King Wên, who reigned rather earlier than the time referred to in the Ode just mentioned, is described as pouring libations from graven cups of jade and metal, and ascribing his long and victorious reign to his filial piety.

King Wu (1169-1116 B.C.), in another poem, sacrifices a bull to his father, King Wên, accompanied by the music of a hymn of eulogy, actually quoted in the Ode, and thanking him for the gifts of long life and other blessings received from Heaven through the merits of the deceased monarch.

The Odes which describe the ancestral sacrifices of the Shang Dynasty (1766-1122 B.C.) are not numerous, but they give important details of rites practised very early in Chinese history.

[Drums, flutes, and bells were sounded, and acolytes of choristers performed a stately dance. / Spirits, and soups carefully prepared from the flesh of sacrificial animals, were offered to the departed ; and those who set out the offerings had to do so in a quiet and amiable frame of mind, in order to induce the soul of the ancestor to confer long life and to bless the harvests.]

A very dignified poem, in praise of the ancestor of the House of Shang, is interesting because it clearly ascribes the welfare of the Dynasty to his reverence for the decrees of Heaven and to the blessing of God on his endeavours.

One is strongly reminded, in these ancient poems, of the Old Testament injunction, 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land.'

The strong hold which immemorial custom and unwritten tradition have upon agricultural races is also emphasised by the wide-spread belief in 'the good old days.'

The Saturnian reign of the Greeks and Romans ; the simple manners which the Taoists attributed to those early times when laws and governments had not

yet become necessary; the Confucian teaching concerning the heroic semi-mythical Emperors, Yao, Shun, and Yü; the naïve stories of men and beasts conversing, as told by Aesop, the Egyptian and negro fabulists, and the Taoist mystics: all these elements in human history are in direct conflict with the idea that the first state of man on the earth was that of a dull-witted, apelike monster, or a terrified, phantom-ridden savage. Rather do they confirm the mysterious references to his original felicity in the Book of Genesis.

The gradual elevation of noble and happy ancestors to the rank of demigods can be understood; and, while this practice on the one hand lent a stimulus to idolatry, it undoubtedly added fixity and regularity to the sanctions of family life on the other.

The resulting consolidation, with the lapse of time, of clan and village organisation, and the natural growth of the simpler arts of life, have had the effect of making the Chinese populace the most easily and cheaply 'governed' in the world. In spite of famine and pestilence, war and civil upheaval, the masses have toiled and trafficked for thousands of years, soberly yet cheerfully, and have become proverbial among the races of Asia for minding their own business—and minding it uncommonly well.

Having no wish to bore my readers with a treatise on Confucius, the one man who is perhaps more misunderstood and misrepresented than any other Chinese, we shall just dip into the recorded lessons and discourses—or 'Analects'—of himself and his chief disciples—and select a few references to the ancestral worship of his time.

'The philosopher Tsêng said, [“ Let there be a careful attention to perform the funeral rites to parents, and let them be followed when long gone with the ceremonies of sacrifice; then the virtue of the people will

resume its proper excellence".<sup>1</sup> Meaning that the virtue of filial piety, liable to be neglected in the turbulent days of Confucius' public teaching, might once more become habitual with the people.

'The Master replied (to a questioner on filial piety), "That parents, when alive, should be served according to propriety; that when dead, they should be buried according to propriety; and that they should be sacrificed to according to propriety".' 'Propriety' here comprises all the moral and ritual principles implied in doing one's duty, either to the living or the dead.

'The Master said, "for a man to sacrifice to a spirit which does not belong to him is flattery".' (That is, it is unseemly and out of place to claim the right of sacrificing to the ancestors of others.)

'In the ceremonies of mourning, it is better that there be deep sorrow than a minute attention to observances.'

'He (Confucius) sacrificed to the dead as if they were present; he sacrificed to the spirits as if they were present.'

"I consider," he said, "my not being present at the sacrifice as if I did not sacrifice".'

'The master said, "He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray".'

The last three quotations show that, stickler for decorum as he was, Confucius valued sincerity in the ancestral rites as of supreme importance; and moreover, that he had a lively sense of the seriousness of sin against the Supreme God.

'Fan Ch'ih asked what constituted wisdom. The Master said, "To give oneself earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom".'

Those who consider this dictum antagonistic to ancestor-worship may be reminded that the wizardry and spiritualism briefly mentioned in other chapters

were widely prevalent at the time, and were most obnoxious to Confucius and his school.

'The subjects on which the Master did not talk were . . . weird (extraordinary) happenings . . . disorder, and spiritual beings.'

'The Master said, "I can find no flaw in the character of Yü. He used, himself, coarse food and drink, but displayed the utmost filial piety towards the spirits. His ordinary garments were poor, but he displayed the utmost elegance in his sacrificial cap and apron . . . ."

Yü it was who, from 2286 B.C. to 2278 B.C., laboured to drain away floods, and reclaim the land from general devastation and ruin; and thrice within the period he passed his home without entering, though he heard the voice of his own child within.

'The Master said, ". . . a superior man, during the whole period of mourning, does not enjoy pleasant food which he may eat, nor derive pleasure from music which he may hear".'

'Tsze Chang said, "the scholar trained for public duty, seeing threatening danger, is prepared to sacrifice his life. When the opportunity of gain is presented to him, he thinks of right dealing. In sacrificing, his thoughts are reverential. In mourning, his thoughts are about grief . . . ."

The disciple, Tsze Chang, here, does not hesitate to rank filial piety with the highest type of probity and public spirit.

In the Confucian Treatise on the 'Doctrine of the Mean,' *i.e.*, the pursuit of moderation and self-control, the Master remarks :

'How abundantly do spiritual beings display the powers that belong to them ! We look for them, but do not see them ; we listen to, but do not hear them ; yet they enter into all things, and there is nothing without them.

‘They cause all the people under Heaven (*i.e.*, in the Empire), to fast and purify themselves, to array themselves in their richest dresses, in order to attend at their sacrifices. Then, like overflowing water, they (*i.e.*, the spirits) seem to be above, and on the right, and on the left of the worshippers. It is said in the Book of Odes: “The approach of the spirits you cannot surmise; and can you treat them with indifference?”’

‘King Wu (1122-1115 B.C.) offered his sacrifices in his ancestral temple, and his descendants maintained the sacrifices to himself.’

Dr. Legge’s notes on this passage are very important, and the substance of them may be quoted briefly here.

During the millennium immediately preceding the Christian era, the sovereigns of China sacrificed to their ancestors every season. The spring and the autumn sacrifices were those most often mentioned, as one would expect in an agricultural community; in fact, the history compiled by Confucius is commonly called ‘The Spring and Autumn Records,’ where we should say, ‘The Annual Records.’

The sacrificial vessels, for the offerings of grain, meat, spirits, etc., were venerated relics, the regalia of the Empire, and were mostly decorated with boldly-conventionalised patterns based upon rain-clouds, waves of the sea, monsters’ faces, and animals’ heads. The parties personating the deceased wore special upper and lower garments during the ritual of accepting, on behalf of their ancestors’ ghosts, the sacrifices offered.

Entirely different language was used about the great sacrifice to the Supreme God of Heaven at the winter solstice. The idea that the ancestors were, after all, subordinate to God, and were invoked to

help the Emperor in discharging his duties to God, is clearly brought out in many classical texts, and does much to establish the monotheistic nature of early Chinese religion. In a graduated system of glorified spirits, polytheism and idolatry were to be looked for, as an almost inevitable feature of the cult; but after all, they played a part only—if a large one—in the worship of the One God.

‘He who attains to the sovereignty of the kingdom presents himself (with his institutions) before spiritual beings, and no doubts about them arise.’

The efficacy of his sacrifices is proved by his energy in obtaining the supreme power, and his prudence in exercising it.

The comparatively matter-of-fact Mencius (372-289 B.C.), was more concerned with the vices and follies of the princes of his day than with the details of ancestor-worship, which he probably took for granted. A few remarks bearing upon it are scattered through his works, and may be noted here.

In reply to a question as to the correct thickness of the wood used for coffins, Mencius tells how, in olden times, the inner and outer shells were both seven inches thick. ‘This was done,’ he adds, ‘not simply for the beauty of the appearance, but because (people) thus satisfied the natural feelings of their hearts.’

The mother of Mencius is justly celebrated for the sacrifices she made, though extremely poor, to bring her boy up well. A widow, and sole guardian of the child, she changed her abode thrice, in order to keep evil example from him. At first she lived near a burial-place, then near a market, and eventually she succeeded in finding a home close to a school.

One day, little Mencius saw a butcher killing a pig, and said ‘What is he doing that for, Mamma?’

‘To provide food for you to eat,’ said she. Then,



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lest the child should not think she was exactly truthful, she bought some of the meat of that very pig and gave it to him to eat.

When he was slightly older, and was wasting his time at school, she took a knife and cut a piece of cloth she was weaving, as a practical lesson to him. He is said to have kept his mother's coffin with him after her death for a considerable period, until he could get leave to escort it to the family burial place in another province.

(No doubt the coffin was a thick one.)

I think pilgrimages are still made to her tomb. In the reign of K'ang Hsi (seventeenth century A.D.), it is quite refreshing to find that the lives of over *twenty-four thousand* eminent women appear, among whom, of course, the mother of Mencius holds a high place.

The History says, "in the observance of mourning and sacrifice, ancestors are to be followed"; "This was a reply to an enquiry as to the maintenance of three years' mourning for parents by people of all classes."

A certain Wan Chang said, "I presume to ask how Mencius replied, and that he exhibited him to the people, Heaven, and Heaven accepted him?"

He caused him to preside over the sacrifices and all the spirits were well pleased with them; thus Heaven accepted him.

Here, again, a wise Emperor chose a commoner as his heir, whose sacrifices to the spirits had obtained—*max populi vox Dei* is well illustrated. The maxim Heaven and the submission of the people.

On another occasion, Hsüan, King of the State of Ch'i, wanted to cut down the official period of mourning. A certain Kung Sun Ch'ou said, "Better one year's mourning than doing away with it altogether."

Whereupon Mencius sarcastically observed, "That is

just as if someone were twisting your elder brother's arm, and you were to admonish the twister mildly, and say, "Do it a little more gently, please." What you ought to do in such a case would be to give the fellow a lesson in filial piety and fraternal duty, and that's all about it !'

A pretty Taoist tale is told of a young girl, a flower-seller of Peking, who supported her aged father. The old man fell ill and took to his bed. The girl could neither eat nor sleep with anxiety ; she did her best for her father, but he grew no better. One day she heard that an elderly woman, a neighbour, was going on pilgrimage with some other women to the Sacred Mountain, T'ai Shan.

'If I went,' asked the girl, 'would my father be cured ?'

'Those who go there and pray sincerely get all that they ask,' replied the neighbour.

'How far is it ?'

'A hundred *li*.'

'And how long is a *li* ?'

'Two hundred and fifty paces.'

The girl made a mental note of these figures ; and every night, while her father was asleep, she went out into the yard, holding a lighted stick of incense, and paced up and down, carefully counting her steps. Then, when unable to move from fatigue, she prostrated herself, facing the mountain, and said : 'Excuse me for not visiting your temple. I am only a girl, and cannot go.'

In a fortnight she made twenty-five thousand paces. Just at that time, pilgrims flocked from all parts to T'ai Shan to venerate the Goddess T'ien Nai Nai (a Taoist deity of the mountain). Rich and poor thronged her temple from cock-crow ; for the pilgrim who was the first to burn incense in the morning was

more likely to have his prayer answered than later comers.

That very morning, a wealthy palace-attendant from Peking had occupied the entrance to the temple, determined at all costs that his should be the first stick of incense to be burnt that day. As soon as he entered he saw, to his amazement, an incense-stick smoking in the burner.

He angrily questioned the guardian of the temple.

'The door was shut,' said the guardian, 'I know nothing about it.'

'I shall be here again to-morrow,' replied the rich man. 'See that you keep the door properly closed this time.'

The next morning, long before dawn, the rich man was there, waiting for the door to open. The moment it did, he rushed to the incense-burner; a stick was already smouldering in it, and the shadowy form of a girl was lying prostrate before the altar of incense. At the noise made by the rich man's entrance, the form vanished.

'What's this?' thought he; 'do Kuei and Kuai (ghosts and goblins) offer incense to this goddess?' And he went out of the temple and asked the other pilgrims what they thought it could be.

'Ah!' said the elderly woman, neighbour of the flower-girl, 'this must be the pious florist I know in Peking. As she cannot come, she has sent her soul to pray for the cure of her aged father.'

The rich man was highly edified; and when he returned to Peking, he visited the girl, praised her filial piety, and left a handsome donation. The old gentleman recovered, and his dutiful daughter married a rich merchant and lived happily ever after.

(The importance of male offspring as the necessary celebrants of ancestor-worship may have something

to do with the charge of murdering quantities of girl-babies, which is sometimes brought against the Chinese people.

Before we condemn the Chinese as being specially prone to a crime which is unfortunately world-wide, it may be worth while to consider the following points.

Infanticide—though little is written about it—is prevalent in Turkey, India, and other countries where women are secluded, and is most difficult to detect, unless one is thoroughly at home in those places, and able to communicate with the women. It is well known that parents in ancient Sparta and Rome, and in many African and other barbaric communities, have claimed the *right* of deciding whether a child is to be destroyed or spared at birth—either on physical or superstitious grounds.

Race suicide and pre-natal murder are alarmingly common in Northern Europe and America, whereas they are forbidden by all the Chinese religions, and are in direct conflict with the views of the Chinese, who are proud of large families. The problem of the illegitimate child hardly exists in China, in view of the patriarchal state of society.

Children who die in infancy rarely have a set funeral in China ; they are merely exposed. Sickly children who are beyond the antiquated medical aid of the average Chinese quack (unfortunately a large number) are exposed ; and the same thing happens in severe famines. The idiomatic expression—to ‘eat girls’—in famine time has sometimes been taken to mean that the starving peasants devour their babies ; what it really means is that peasants will sell their children into slavery and buy food with the proceeds rather than see them die of hunger along with the rest of the family.

Imperial Edicts have been published, and fearsome punishments described in religious books, denouncing the practice of infanticide. Nothing can compare with

the terrifying penalties with which these books threaten the murderers of young children. Europeans of both sexes who have lived long in China describe the people as very fond of children, and inclined to indulge them ; but as life is hard, the mortality of the children of the poor is excessive.

Even in England, the humane treatment of children, judging by the writings of Charles Dickens and others, is not a very ancient institution ; and it is most unusual for cases of infanticide to be punished by the death penalty.

We owe a powerful and almost unanswerable argument against the undue prevalence of female infanticide in China to Professor Herbert A. Giles, a fearlessly truthful writer. In all human communities, more boys are born than girls ; in Europe, more girls survive infancy, but we may grant that Chinese girls have not quite so good a chance on medical and other grounds. Now every Chinese marries, and is entitled to a secondary wife if his chief spouse has no sons ; therefore, as a mere matter of arithmetic, the number of ' superfluous women ' must be exceedingly small.

Looking the facts fairly in the face, and remembering that death in China is regarded merely as the beginning of a fresh life, in human or other form ; that the Chinese bear disease and bereavement very stoically, as the inevitable result of wrongdoing in this or a former incarnation ; looking also to the vast numbers of the destitute, the ignorant, and the superstitious in China, when compared with Europe ; it is hardly fair to assume that the deplorable crime of infanticide is peculiarly a Chinese offence, or even that it is more prevalent—in proportion to the density and poverty of the population—that it is in similar circumstances elsewhere.

Readers of this book will have noticed how easily the populace of China swallow, pass on, and exaggerate

horrible rumours, even of such things as cannibalism, and torture of the most gruesome kind. Experienced residents and travellers in China know how much reliance may be placed on these reports, and the majority of them treat stories of wholesale infanticide in the same way.

It is not very edifying to read, in a recent American book on the colour-question, that the good work done by missionaries and others in reducing the death-rate of Chinese babies by hygienic measures is denounced as a menace to the birth-controlling communities of the United States and to other materialists of the Western world. As a contrast to this we will consider for a few minutes how anxious the Chinese really are about the safe and auspicious birth of their children, and what precautions they take to ensure it.

The Earth Spirits, who are so easily disturbed and angered by the displacement of the ground, and even of buildings and other heavy objects placed upon it, are blamed by them for many of the mishaps that may occur either before or after the arrival of the baby.

A man who drives a nail into a wall during his wife's pregnancy may nail down an earth spirit ; hence the child may be born blind of one eye, or with a lame leg, or with severe gastric disease. No furniture should be moved ; even the rolling-up of a bed-mat (usually kept flat) may cause the baby to be born with a curly mis-shapen ear. A man whose child had a hare-lip told the celebrated Dr. de Groot that it was caused by his making a big cut with the scissors in an old coat, which he was repairing during his wife's pregnancy.

The expectant mother should never watch the digging of foundations, or in fact any digging ; nor any repairs to buildings, nor any beating down or piercing of the soil. In some districts builders and contractors are expected to delay operations until after



the birth of any child whose arrival is to be expected in the immediate vicinity.

To preserve the male line and ensure continuity of ancestor-worship, male children are deliberately given mean, vulgar, and even coarse nicknames, that the evil spirits may not hear their true names and thus obtain power to hurt them, or that they may pass them by as too insignificant to be interfered with. They are dressed up as girls, tigers' head caps are put on their heads, and red threads or scraps of red cloth are attached to their hair or clothing, as safeguards against sorcerers and devils.

At the other end of the scale, respect for mere old age, as such, is very marked among the Chinese. A man, they say, cannot reach old age unless he leads a temperate, upright life; and in a warm climate, where medical aid and sanitation are non-existent, this is generally true. The 'immortals' or Hsien of the Taoists are not represented as persons who, like Faust, have regained their youth by magic in order to lead a life of self-indulgence, but as venerable white-bearded sages, enjoying a prolonged old age in beautiful mountain scenery, and passing their time in poetry, music, and the 'elegant leisure' of an elderly scholar—as a reward of self-abnegation.

Burial of the dead (infants excepted) in due form, and on sites which are considered auspicious (see the chapter on 'Fêng Shui') is inseparable from ancestor-worship; so that the practices of burning and exposing the dead are not usual, and are severely condemned by various writers.

In very early times, however, there is reason to believe that unburied or exposed human remains were more often to be found. Among certain Indonesians and South Sea islanders, the practice of exposing corpses is, I believe, still prevalent; and such evidence as we have links up the races of China proper with

several peoples of South Eastern Asia and the Malay Archipelago.

Later on in history, during great epidemics or famines, when coffins were not to be had, numbers of bodies have been exposed ; and public spirited persons have been honoured for digging plague-pits and burying therein the remains of the poor and the friendless.

To throw a body into water seems always to have been regarded by the Chinese with great horror. Under the Mings it was an offence punishable by severe flogging.

Cremation came in with Buddhism, although the ashes of lay Buddhists were usually buried afterwards. The revival of Confucian philosophy and the consequent reaction against foreign rituals in the Sung Period (tenth to thirteenth centuries A.D.) gradually undermined the practice, which was then widespread, and it has since come to be regarded as peculiar to the Buddhist monks.

Severe legislation against cremation under the Sung was followed by toleration on the part of the Mongol Emperors of the Yüan Dynasty, who were themselves Buddhists and rulers of several professedly Buddhist countries outside of China. Then came the Mings (A.D. 1368-1644), who did not even allow people's remains to be cremated when they had left instructions in their wills to that effect. The only exception made was for the conveyance of cremated ashes from abroad, in cases where it would have been impossible to transport the whole body to its family resting-place in China. This difficulty, ever since the idea of cremation was rendered familiar by Buddhism, has had something to do with the survival of the practice when the remains have a long way to travel ; but the Chinese have such a horror of mutilating or injuring a corpse—even the corpse of a criminal who has ]



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suffered the harshest punishment while living—that, in the words of Dr. de Groot, cremation is bound to die out, just as the foreign cult which introduced the practice into China is itself dying out.

When a body is deliberately dug up and burnt, it is nearly always as a remedy for those gruesome manifestations which are widely known and dreaded under the name of 'vampirism.'

These will be the subject of the following chapter.

## IX

### VAMPIRES

THE belief in Vampires, horrible as it is, is as widely spread in China as elsewhere, and is so baffling to any student who endeavours to link it up with reality, that this chapter is written rather to stimulate enquiry into the origin and cause of the superstition than to offer examples of what is already known about it.

The vampire, in Chinese Ch'iang Shih, is a demon which inhabits a corpse and preserves it from decay by preying upon other corpses, or upon living people. This demon-agent is held to be the inferior or animal soul, which in some instances remains with the body instead of going elsewhere in one form or another, or being dissipated into vapour. The Chinese dread vampires more, perhaps, than any other uncanny entity; and in European and other folk-lore, there is nothing more grim or repulsive. The Chinese being very imaginative, and holding the views of their own souls and of other spirits touched upon in former chapters, have this further excuse for fearing vampires, that the Far Eastern variety only requires the skeleton, or even the skull of the deceased to remain undecayed for the P'o (or lower soul) to become a vampire, unless certain precautions are observed. For example, a cat should never be allowed in the room with a corpse; if the animal should jump over it, it may impart to the body (still containing the lower soul) a modicum of the tiger nature, and the corpse may become a vampire. Similarly, if the sun or the moon should be allowed to

shine directly upon the unburied body, thus infusing into it a supply of Yang or positive force, the lower soul will be strengthened, and will go forth to supply the corpse with human blood to keep it undecayed. Possibly this idea has something to do with the European practice of pulling down blinds when there is a death in the house.

Chinese vampires generally have glaring eyes, long, sharp claws, and a body covered with white or greenish white hair. Vampires of long standing acquire the art of flying, and in this guise have been confused with yakshas (a Buddhist type of demon). Such spectres are sometimes destroyed by a flash of lightning, which distinctly points to antagonism between them and the early Vedic gods such as Agni, Indra and other patrons of ~~fair weather and foul~~. Indra, in particular, after a long and varied career in the Hindu pantheon, was still a very popular deity in Buddha's native district. He now occupies a fairly honourable position in the modified Buddhism of the Far East, as ruler of a subordinate paradise, and is a trusty henchman of Buddha. He has also been identified with Tung Wang Kung, a Taoist solar divinity, and must, by all accounts, have been a stout fellow !

The stories annexed show an amazing similarity to the vampire-tales of Europe and the Near East ; but whether this is due to the uniform reaction of the human mind to the same stimulus, or to some peculiarity common to all men and providing both the stimulus and its results, is not clear to the writer.

- ① Liu, a lower-grade literate, tutor to a family living some distance from his home, obtained a holiday at Ch'ing Ming time in order to tend his ancestral tombs. On the day of his return to duty his wife, entering his room to call him in the early morning, found his headless body on the bed, but no trace of blood.

● The woman gave the alarm, but was arrested on suspicion of having murdered her husband, and remanded in gaol for further enquiries to be made. Then, one day, a neighbour gathering firewood on an adjoining hill saw a good, sound coffin, its lid partly raised, lying near a neglected grave. Suspecting robbery, he called some people together, and they approached and took off the lid. Within was a corpse with the face of a living man, its body covered with white hair. Between its arms it held the missing head of Liu ! The corpse held the head so tightly that its arms had to be chopped off to release the head ; fresh blood gushed from its arms, but the head of Liu was dry and bloodless. The magistrate ordered the corpse to be burnt, and Liu's widow to be set free. (Tzu Pub Yü.)

☺ One night, four travellers, very tired, turned up at an inn in Ts'ai Tien, Shan Tung. The inn was full, but the travellers pressed the innkeeper to shelter them ; and with much hesitation, he put them in a lonely house near by, in which his daughter-in-law had recently died. The house was lit by a dim lamp, and behind a curtain lay the uncoffined body of the girl. The four weary men flung themselves down on the beds provided, and three of them were soon snoring lustily. The fourth was not quite asleep when he heard a creaking sound behind the curtain. He opened his eyes and saw the corpse rise up, push aside the curtain, and approach. It stooped over the three sleepers and blew thrice upon them ; the fourth, in terror, hid his head under the coverlet and held his breath. The corpse breathed on him also and withdrew. Hearing a rustling sound he peeped out, and saw that it had returned to its couch, and was lying as still as before.

Afraid to call out, the traveller stealthily kicked his

sleeping comrades, but they did not stir ; so he quietly reached for his clothes in the hope of creeping away. Every time he moved, however, he heard the creak of the bier ; and he dived under the blanket again and again, listening all the time to the corpse, who came across and breathed on him. At last, a pause, followed by the rustling of the shroud, nerved him to a final effort. He put out his hand, seized some clothes, scrambled into them, and rushed, barefooted, from the house. The corpse jumped up, and although he bolted the door in its face, it chased him a long way, gaining on him until, in desperation, he dodged behind a willow-tree four or five feet thick. As the corpse darted to the right, he darted to the left ; this went on for some time, until the enraged corpse rushed at him, missed him as he fell in a faint, and embraced the tree with a rigid grip. At daybreak it was found, when the corpse was pulled away, that its fingers had bored into the tree like an auger. The traveller eventually recovered, but his companions all died of the effects of the corpse's breath. (*Liao Chai.*)

Outside the Southern Gate of Tan Yang, Kiang Su, a certain Lu had an orchard, which brought him a fair profit every year. Naturally he kept watch, with his sons' help, night and day, when the fruit was ripe. One moonlight night he was seated, watching, upon a stone, when he suddenly saw among the trees a head, covered with disordered hair, appear out of the ground. He called his sons, and they all went to see what it was. A woman, dressed in red, rose before them ; whereupon the old man fainted, and the sons ran away terrified. The woman pursued them to the door of their house ; there she stopped with one foot inside the threshold and the other outside. At the cries of the sons, a number of people ran to the rescue ; but the icy breath of the spectre kept them back. The

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woman entered, glided under a bed and disappeared. Then the sons went to their father and brought him round with a strong decoction of ginger ; but after that they were afraid to guard their fruit-trees, and a thief entered the orchard one night. Next morning he was found, lying on the ground, almost frightened to death. He said he had seen a man without a head. Thereupon they dug in the garden in the place where the manifestations had taken place, and discovered a red coffin, containing the body of the woman whose ghost had appeared, and a black one, containing the corpse of a decapitated man. Both bodies were perfectly preserved. They were burnt, and thereafter all was quiet.

Once upon a time, there dwelt at Hang Chou a clever artist called Liu I Hsien. Close by lived a father and his son ; and when the father died, the son asked Liu to make a memorial portrait of him, while he (the son) went out to see about the coffin. When Liu reached the house no one was in ; and finding no corpse on the ground floor, he went upstairs. There was the body, stretched upon the camp bed generally used for the dead. Liu sat down, spread out his paper and got to work. Presently the corpse sat up, yawned and stretched itself. 'Oh !' thought Liu to himself, 'this is a vampire. If I move it will spring upon me ; if I run away it will chase me. I had better sit still and go on drawing.' So he continued his task, every movement he made being imitated by the corpse.

At last the son came in, and when he saw the body sitting up on the bed he fainted with terror. A neighbour, who entered and came upstairs, fainted likewise. Still Liu went on with the portrait. At last he heard, in the courtyard, the undertaker's men bringing the coffin. 'Get some brooms and come up as fast as you can !' he cried to them.

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They at once grasped what was the matter, and rushing up with brooms, they beat the vampire down upon the bed with repeated blows, and enclosed it in the coffin. Then they revived the son and the neighbour with the usual decoction of ginger. (*Tzū Pub Yü.*)

The following anecdote is not without a touch of humour.

A Mr. Ch'ien lived outside the I-Fêng gate of the town of T'ung Ch'êng. One night he returned very late from a party, although his friends tried to persuade him to spend the night with them, and not risk meeting anything uncanny. Ch'ien, however, had been enjoying himself, and was merry with wine; so he seized a lantern, mounted his horse, and stoutly set out for home. On the way he had to cross a flat space covered with graves. Suddenly he saw a spectre rise out of a cutting in the earth, and come leaping towards him. It had straggly hair, bare feet, and a face as white as chalk. The horse was frightened and refused to move; the lantern burned dimly, giving out a pale greenish glow. Ch'ien, reckless with drinking, stood his ground; and when the Thing reached him he gave it a buffet on the cheek that turned its head completely round. It retreated, but wishing to make a fresh attack, its face glared at Ch'ien, while its legs carried it away from him. Again and again it repeated these antics, and eventually re-entered the cutting and disappeared.

Next morning Ch'ien noticed that the hand with which he had struck the vampire was as black as ink, and it did not regain its colour for four years. When he asked the neighbours what they thought of the manifestation, they said it was a newly-made vampire, which did not yet know its business!

Instances of stupid malice, as well as of devilish

cunning, are not uncommon in ghost and demon stories all over the world ; and the belief that some ghosts have their feet turned backwards is to be found in India.

In 1761, a government courier called Chang Kuei was sent from Peking with an urgent dispatch. One night after passing Liang Hsiang, he was caught in a storm and his lantern was blown out. Thinking he saw a small rest-house by the road, he made his way to it. A girl of about eighteen ushered him into a cottage, gave him hospitality, and looked after his horse. Next day, at dawn, he failed to wake up ; but some hours later, pierced with the cold and disturbed by the wind in the trees, he came to himself, and found that he was lying on a tomb in dense undergrowth, with his horse tied to a tree close by. When he delivered his dispatch, over twelve hours late, he was questioned, and related what had happened. The authorities made enquiries on the spot, and learned that a girl named Chang, of evil repute, had hanged herself there, and had treated several people in the same way as she had the courier. Her tomb was opened, and the body was found to be fresh and rosy ; so it was burnt by order of the authorities.

Two citizens of Nanking, whom we will call Chang and Li, great friends, went to Canton together on business. As Chang had to return first, Li gave him a letter to his family, which was duly delivered. On arriving, Chang heard that Li's father had just died, and the body was lying in state in the main hall of the house. Chang made the usual ritual offerings and lamentations ; and the widow, touched by his friendship, gave him supper and a guest-room to sleep in. This room was separated by the width of a courtyard from the death-chamber.



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Very late in the night, Chang heard a slight sound ; so he looked through a crack in the paper window, and saw a somewhat singular performance. The widow Li, holding a lighted incense-stick, was praying by the bier of her husband. Then, approaching Chang's bedroom door very quietly, she took off her girdle and tied the handles of the two leaves of his door firmly together. After that she withdrew for the night.

Chang, not daring to go back to bed, continued watching through the crack in his window. The coffin opened and its occupant sat up. His face was black, his eyes were hollow and glaring, and his whole appearance was fierce and horrible to behold. Taking a deep breath (!) the Thing left the coffin and made straight for Chang's door, an icy wind whistling from its mouth. The girdle snapped, and although Chang held the doors with all his strength, the vampire burst into the room. Chang rushed behind a clothes chest, which he pushed over on the vampire when it attacked him. Then he fainted.

The widow, aided by her servants, revived him with ginger, and explained what had happened.

'My husband,' she said, 'was a bad character in life, and has been very troublesome since his death. Last night he appeared to me and said, "Chang is coming with a letter. He will have a large sum of money on him ; I will steal it and share it with you." I thought it was a mere idle dream ; but when you came with the letter, I burned incense before my husband's coffin, and begged him to abandon his wicked design. I also tied up your doors in the hope that he would not be able to open them. I had no idea he was so strong and so wicked. You only just escaped a terrible fate.'

Then the servants lifted the clothes chest, picked up the body of the vampire, and laid it anew in the coffin.

'You will not be able to leave the body undestroyed,' said Chang. 'It will become a public scourge.'

'You are right,' replied the widow, 'but he was my husband; and so far I have not made up my mind what I ought to do.'

Thereupon Chang consulted some celebrated Buddhist priests, who performed a service for the happy passage of the late Li's soul, and burned the body.

Ch'iang, a minor official in the Province of Chih Li, once noticed a man whose wrists moved incessantly, as if he were ringing bells. He asked the reason of this nervous affliction, so the man told his story.

'I come from a mountain village close to a cave where a vampire used to take refuge. It would fly to my village, seeking for children to devour. No precautions availed us; the monster came night after night, and always caught someone. At last we heard of a wise Taoist priest in an adjoining city, and by dint of presents we induced him to take the matter up. He agreed, chose a lucky day, erected an altar, and said: "My arts enable me to spread the heavenly and earthly snares that will prevent the vampire from flying; but it is for you to dislodge and kill him. Now, my chief helper must be a man utterly devoid of fear." Everyone hung back, until at length I volunteered to try. "Take two bells," said the adept, "and while the others form an outer circle, you must hide near the mouth of the cave, until the monster comes out. When he emerges, you must go in, and begin ringing the bells. The sound of copper instruments renders spectres powerless; the vampire will be unable to re-enter the cave, and the others will kill him outright. But on no account stop ringing, even for a moment, or the vampire will seize you."

'At nightfall we made our arrangements. The priest took up his position at the altar, the villagers formed a circle around. The vampire came out, and tried to prepare for flight. I rushed behind him into the cave, ringing the bells; whereupon the vampire, baulked by the magic nets and hemmed in by the villagers, came for me. Distractedly I rang and rang, until I was out of breath. The vampire glared at me with eyes like lightning, but could not seize me. Thus we remained, face to face, neither daring to attack the other, until the first streak of dawn, when the vampire fell dead. We burnt the body at once. Since that terrible night, I have never been cured of the bell-ringing movement in my wrists.'

The accountant Li Nien Hsien was on a journey in Che Kiang, collecting rents. Reaching a certain village at nightfall, he discovered that there was no inn. He saw a light in a shed, approached, and found a man groaning on a bed.

'Can I pass the night here?' asked Li.

'All my people have died of typhus,' replied the man. 'I am not feeling well myself, but I do not mind your staying, if you care to risk it.'

Li was tired, and decided to stay; so he handed the man two hundred cash, and asked him if he was well enough to fetch some wine, telling him he might keep the change. Thereupon Li, being utterly exhausted with fatigue, lay down on a bag of rice in the yard. A cold wind and a slight rustling aroused him. He struck a light. The feeble glow of his tinder enabled him to see a dishevelled woman, thin, pale, and corpse-like, gliding over the straw in the yard. In terror, he struck spark after spark, and the vision became clearer. 'It is a vampire,' said he himself, as he retreated towards the door, the vampire advancing as he receded. Once outside, he took to his heels, the vampire after

him, until he reached the village tavern. Li rushed in, uttered a great cry, and fell down fainting. The vampire, at the same moment, sank to the ground.

The innkeeper revived Li and asked him to tell his story, while others lifted up the body of the vampire. It was the wife of the man in whose shed Li had rested ; she had died of typhus and was still unburied. Later they found the husband by the roadside, dead, fifty paces from the tavern, which he had been too weak to reach. In his hands were the two hundred cash.

During the eighteenth century A.D. an important Tartar family in Peking arranged a marriage for their son with the daughter of a house of similar rank. (1)

During the wedding procession, the closed sedan-chair of the bride was being carried past an ancient tomb, when a whirlwind sprang up, raising a dust-cloud so thick as to blind all the attendants for some minutes. When the sedan reached the husband's house, two brides of identical aspect and dress stepped out ! The husband's parents looked at one another, but it was utterly impossible to make any enquiries or show any doubt when things had gone so far ; so the various rituals were performed, the worship of heaven and earth and the ancestral offerings were completed, and the young husband thought to himself, 'After all, it may turn out better to have two than one.'

Later on, distressing cries were heard from the nuptial chamber. The door was burst open, and there lay the husband on the floor, while on the bed was one of the brides, her eyes torn from their sockets and her face streaming with blood. The other bride had vanished.

On searching with torches the attendants discovered, perched on a beam of the roof, a large black and grey bird, with a sharp beak and claws. While

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they were looking for spears to attack it, it flew out of the door.

When the husband regained consciousness, he explained that one of the brides had struck him in the face with her sleeve, and blinded him. Immediately after, a huge bird had flown at him, and torn out his eyes with its beak. How sad was that wedding, says the narrator, that began with the blinding of the married pair !

✓ This rather unusual type of vampire, a Kuei or ghost that did evil for evil's sake, was helped in its wicked design by the Chinese custom of bringing home the bride in an entirely closed-up sedan-chair. Its transformation into a bird of prey recalls the vampire beliefs of Eastern Europe.

In 1741 a gruesome event is said to have happened in a temple dedicated to the three heroes, Kuan Yü, Chang Fei and Liu Pei, deified warriors of the troublous civil wars of the third century A.D.

Except on the occasions of the spring and autumn sacrifices, the place was always kept locked, and even the priest in charge never dared to sleep there.

One night a Shan Si man, with a flock of about a thousand sheep, asked permission to take shelter in the temple. He was warned that it was haunted, but he gathered his sheep together under the verandas, and went in, armed with his big whip and a lighted candle. He felt a little uneasy from the outset ; and about midnight he heard a slight stirring under the pedestal of the three statues. Suddenly a very tall man rose out of the ground near the pedestal. His eyes, hollow and black, flashed lightning, and his body was covered with a sort of greenish fleece. He glowered at the shepherd, breathed on him, and tried to seize him in his sharp claws. The shepherd lashed him as hard as he could with his whip, but the spectre did not seem

to feel anything, and bit through the heavy leather with its teeth. Then the shepherd rushed out and climbed a large tree in the courtyard; the vampire glared ferociously, but made no attempt to follow him.

At daybreak people began to move about, and the spectre disappeared. More dead than alive, the shepherd told his tale, and the base of the statues was examined. A dark vapour was seen to be rising from the cracks in the stone, so the Sub-Prefect of the District ordered the pedestal to be broken down. Digging beneath it, they found a tall man's body, dried up, and covered with a green growth like a fleece. The official had a pyre erected, and the body was burnt at once. The vampire whistled, blood flowed from it, and its bones cracked.

No more hauntings occurred there afterwards.

Before quoting further examples of Chinese vampirism, one may observe how closely these tales agree with what we are told of the vampires of Eastern Europe. 'The malevolence and strength of the monster, and its power of assuming various forms, are manifested between sunset and sunrise; and it is not represented as attacking only the weak-minded or the wicked, but as entirely and gratuitously hostile to all comers.'

It would be interesting to learn, from anyone who has read extensively in Chinese, whether magicians are considered to be more likely than ordinary people to become vampires after death. Hungarian folklore attributes vampirism, in certain well-known legends, to persons who had tampered with 'black magic' during life, or who had been bled to death by a vampire. From the little we know of Chinese literature on the subject, the 'transmission' of vampirism from the attacker to the victim does not, as a

rule, appear to be an important feature of the manifestation.

The *Prêta*, or suffering soul of a suicide seeking a substitute, is not quite a parallel to the true vampire.

A plague or epidemic of some sort is personified, more or less in vampire form, in a story of about 1756.

One evening, after a very hot day, a Mr. Su was washing himself, by the light of a rather dim moon, when he thought he heard the sound of breathing in his room; and a light mist floated in. At the same time a feather duster, lying on a table, began turning round and round of itself. Su rapped sharply on the edge of his bed, and told the broom to stop moving. At once his bath-towel and his teacup flew out of the window, and he heard the crack as the cup broke against the trunk of a tree. Su was now thoroughly startled, so he called his servants and went out into the garden with them. A black shadow shrouded the roof of the house. When it dispersed, he went back to his bedroom and sat down on the side of the bed. Then the feather broom began turning round again. Su seized it in his hands. It felt like wet hair, was cold as ice, and exhaled a horrible odour. His arm grew numb, but still he did not let go. Then he heard a voice, as harsh as the cry of a parrot, issuing from the mouth of a jar. 'I am Wu Chung,' cried the voice. 'I come from Lake Hung Chai, from which the Spirit of Thunder has banished me. Let me go!'

Su was aware that an epidemic was raging in the district, so he said to the feather broom, still holding it firmly: 'Are you not more likely to be the spirit of the plague?'

'Yes, I am,' said the voice.

'Then I shall not let you go,' said Su. 'You will do harm to the people.'

'I will tell you of a remedy,' said the voice.

‘ Very well, dictate it,’ said Su.

The spirit dictated the charm, and Su wrote it down.

‘ Don’t let it go !’ cried the servants. ‘ Let us imprison it in the jar.’

Su then put the feather duster in the jar, sealed it up, and flung the jar into Lake T’ai. The charm was then used on the sick, and was successful in every instance.

Here we have a vampire floating into the house in the form of a mist, as in Hungarian folk-lore, and the imprisonment of a demon in a jar, on the lines of the *Arabian Nights* narrative.

Wills-o’-the-Wisp, which are fire and disease devils, were described by ancient Chinese writers as arising from blood ; and their behaviour recalls in some ways the appearances of the vampires of Eastern Europe in the form of whirling specks of luminous matter. In China, besides being harbingers of illness, they are bad for the harvests.

† The *T’ien Kung Kai Wub* says :

‘ When, after the ears of corn have sprouted, spectral lights flit about in the dark and singe it, it is a sixth catastrophe. These lights are emitted from the interior of decaying wood, so that wood is their mother, and the lights are her children. . . . Whenever the year is rainy so that in the graves on the lonely plains—sapped and ruined by foxes as so often they are—the coffins are soaked and in a rotten condition, their wood decays and the lights detach themselves from it and fly about. Being lights produced by Yin, they can endure no Yang (sun) light, and await the twilight after sunset to burst forth . . . lacking power to rise in the air, they move about irregularly over short distances ; and when ears and blades of corn come in contact with them, these are at once cut off, singed and burnt. The men who chase away these



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lights, whenever they see roots of trees emit them, fall upon them and beat them. . . . When spectre light sees lamp light, it vanishes of its own accord.'

A luminous fly, whose larvæ live in decaying vegetable matter, appears in swarms in the hot weather; and about the time when the summer festival of the dead is celebrated, the flies are most numerous and troublesome. Tropical diseases are at their worst in such weather; a coincidence bound to appear uncanny to the Chinese. The confusion of these flies with true *ignes fatui* is not to be wondered at, as both are found in marshy places. In some districts the vital spirits (Ching) of corpses lying on the ground, which give rise, as is supposed, to those fire-flies, are said to have appeared as five girls in embroidered garments, representing the *five* cardinal points, viz., the North, South, East, West and Centre of the Universe. Burning incense drives them away, and if they enter a human dwelling, emitting a red light, calamity follows.

{ These vague fears of anything and everything seen after dark—especially of things whose origin is not understood—serve to show how thoroughly the rank and file of the Chinese people are predisposed to a belief in vampires.

The London *Daily Express* of 17th April, 1925, printed the following remarkable paragraph:—

‘VAMPIRE BRAIN.

‘PLAN TO PRESERVE IT FOR SCIENCE.

‘Berlin, *Thursday, April 16th.*

‘The body of Fritz Haarmann, executed yesterday at Hanover for twenty-seven murders, will not be buried until it has been examined at Göttingen University.

‘Owing to the exceptional character of the crimes—most of Haarmann’s victims were *bitten to death*—the

case aroused tremendous interest among German scientists. It is probable that Haarmann's brain will be removed and preserved by the University authorities.—Central News.'

The *Kuei T'ung*, twelfth century, relates that a man in Kuang Si (S. China), being stricken with a serious disease, was told by a Taoist that the flesh of children would restore his strength. Rumour had it that numbers of young people of both sexes were kidnapped and their bodies devoured by him.

The case, magnified and perhaps invented by rumours which, in times of panic, sometimes spread very fast in China, came before the magistrate, but the evidence available was only sufficient for the banishment of the alleged cannibal.

Seeing that sorcerers and kidnappers receive no mercy either from the magistrates or the lower orders in China, it is very likely that the mandarin made large allowances for the credulity and imaginativeness of his fellow-countrymen.

Skeletons, especially those of persons not buried in proper graves, and isolated, neglected skulls, are addicted to ghoulish practices, on account of their furnishing an attachment or lurking-place for the inferior soul.

During the hottest part of the summer of A.D. 765, a Mr. Wang, having dined rather freely, was asleep on a couch, with one arm hanging down. His wife, fearing he would take a chill, wanted to raise his arm and put it under the coverlet; but a huge hand arose out of the ground, seized Wang's arm, and dragged it down towards the earth.

His wife and the servants made a plucky attempt to pull in the opposite direction, but, in spite of their united efforts, Wang's whole body was gradually pulled down into a half-open cleft in the ground. The

whole family immediately began to dig, to see what was the cause of the haunting ; and a couple of yards underground they found a complete skeleton, evidently some centuries old.

The P'o of the dead man had become either a malicious Kuei, or a Prêta in search of a substitute.

An adventure with a skull also befell Mr. Sun, who, with his pupil Min Mo Ch'ia, was fond of whiling away the hottest days of summer at the chess-board.

One day, in the sixth month of the year 1727, when Min had invited his teacher Sun and some friends to a chess match, the old man excused himself, at the end of the contest, and went to take a nap in a bedroom on the eastern side of the house.

Presently feeble cries for help were heard coming from the bedroom. Min and his companions rushed in and found the old man lying on the floor, foaming at the mouth and gasping for breath.

They revived him with ginger, and asked him what had happened.

'I was dozing on the bed,' said Sun, 'when I felt a portion of my back, about the size of a nut, go very cold. Soon the feeling spread, and the cold part was as big as a plate, and was getting colder and colder. I felt the mat on which I was lying, and it was like ice. I was wondering why this should be, when I heard, under the bed, a sound like that of breathing, and I saw a skull, which was blowing on the bed. I was so terrified that I fell on the ground. The skull jumped at me and hit me several blows on the head. Then I called out, and as soon as you came in it vanished.'

The four guests wanted to dig up the ground under the bed and solve the mystery, but the Min family would not hear of it ; so the room was abandoned and kept locked up.

The cold wind is associated—here as in Europe—with super-normal manifestations, and is another

curious link between the folk-lore of China and the West.

One night in 1336 or 1337, a man called Yin and his friends went for a walk near the Hsi Ch'ia Lake, and after strolling about for a while, sat down to eat some pickled plums.

There happened to be a skull lying on the ground close by, and they thought it a joke to push the plum stones into the mouth of the skull and ask it 'whether they tasted salty?'

Then they got up and sauntered homeward in the moonlight. Suddenly, on turning round, one of them noticed a dark ball, rolling and bounding along behind them, and calling out 'Salty! Salty!'

They all took to their heels, and ran about six *li* to the nearest canal, where they hailed a ferry-boat and were taken over.

From that moment they saw and heard no more of the skull.

Two other young blades, of a frivolous turn of mind, were staying with a man of means in the autumn, while the weather was still very hot.

One night, finding their room stuffy, they strolled out into the grounds, and came upon a pavilion by a lake, with a beautiful view of the mountains. They moved their beds into it, and spent several nights there quite comfortably. A few evenings later, after a long walk in the moonlight, they came in, and had just stretched themselves upon their beds, when they heard steps on the veranda, and a voice singing in a low tone some stanzas of poetry about the spring flowers and the autumn moon. At first they thought it must be their host, the owner of the estate, taking a stroll, but they soon noticed that the voice was that of a woman. They peeped through a crevice, and saw a

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girl standing with her back to the balustrade of the veranda.

‘Who is it?’ whispered one. ‘Is it a member of the family whom we have not met?’

They peeped again, and noticed that she was wearing a very ancient costume.

‘It’s a ghost!’ said one.

‘She is pretty,’ said the other. So he called out, ‘Why don’t you come in?’

‘Why don’t you come out?’ replied a feminine voice.

They opened the door and came out together. The woman had vanished. They called, and heard her answer from among the trees. They then began looking for her, and suddenly came upon a woman’s head, hanging from a willow-tree. They cried out in terror. The head fell to the ground, and pursued them by leaps and bounds. They ran as hard as they could to the house, entered, and barred the door. The head crashed against the door, which they held against it, and then began biting at the threshold, the wood cracking and splintering in its teeth. At cock-crow it ceased gnawing at the doorstep and rolled into the lake.

As soon as it was broad daylight, the young men collected their luggage, and went back to their host’s house. They were ill for over a month with the shock.

In a Scottish folk-tale from Dornoch, Sutherland, a man who had to attend a funeral on New Year’s Day, and thereby miss the festivities of the season, happening to see a skull at his feet, hit it with his staff, saying, ‘You are alone and uncared for, like me. No one has invited me to the New Year’s festivity; I invite you!’ That night, as he and his wife sat down alone to supper, a venerable man entered and shared the meal in

silence. He came again and again for six nights, but never uttered a word. At last the old man, being induced to speak, invited his host to a feast in the churchyard, in an imperious manner that brooked no refusal. The host, shaking with fear, went to the graveyard and found there a gaily lit house, full of people eating, drinking and dancing. After an apparent lapse of a few hours, the old man warned the mortal visitor to go home ; and when he got there he found his wife ready to remarry, as a year had elapsed since the graveyard feast of her husband.

The 'Rip Van Winkle' element is here combined with the haunting power of a skull, in a place where the infiltration of an East Asiatic superstition was possible, by way of Lapland and Norway.

Leeks, and particularly garlic, are considered good remedies for spectral poisoning, and the European use of garlic as a preservative against vampires is another link with Chinese beliefs on the subject. Any strong flavour or odour overpowers the smell of decaying matter, putrid food, sewage, etc., and the simple-minded Oriental imagines that if the odour is not perceptible the evil has been removed. The West Indian negroes, I am told, rub themselves with garlic to neutralise the efforts of witches and 'obeah men.' Incense, besides masking bad smells, attracts good spirits, who are fond of sweet odours ; and being made from the gums or 'coagulated blood' of auspicious plants, incense embodies most of their Shên or higher spiritual nature. A certain kind of incense, burned before fainting persons in order to restore consciousness, is credited with 'bringing back the soul.' The little bundles of Japanese incense-sticks sold in Europe are sometimes inscribed 'Sun and Moon Incense,' and are packed in red paper, so as to enhance the Yang influence of their fragrant fumes.

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

How did the 'vampire' theory originate?

It is peculiar that this, the most terrible and gruesome of all folk myths, should seldom be the subject of speculation as to its *cause*. Belief in vampires is not confined to China, nor even to the Mongolic and Finno-Ugrian races; yet the main features of the superstition are alike everywhere.

It may, perhaps, be suggested that it is the outcome of a combination of causes, all working together.

Chinese notions about the unity of life and the powers of the lower soul are, like a certain Biblical personage, 'capable of anything'; but they do not account for the qualities common to Chinese and other vampires.

It may be helpful here to recapitulate the following considerations :—

Persons who have vivid and distressing dreams of one dead can quite readily believe that a ghost has been the cause of them;

The dead, according to Chinese belief, carry over to the other life the loves and hatreds of their life on earth;

Ghosts undergoing the Buddhist purgatory of hunger and penury may well be imagined as seizing and devouring living bodies, to refresh themselves with the blood. Buddhism, as we have seen, accepts belief in any and every kind of monster as an automatic outcome of 'Karma';

Freshly-spilt blood is believed, outside of China, to attract spectres and enable them to 'materialise,' and to propitiate demons or uneasy ghosts;

Wills-o'-the-wisp are thought, in China, to be a sign of a place where blood has been shed, such as an old battlefield; and mists and marsh-lights are associated both with the belief in vampires and in spectres of disease;

Ritual cannibalism and blood-drinking, either as a

sacrifice to the gods or with the intention of absorbing the bravery of a fallen foe, are mentioned in the traditional history of most countries. Generally, though not always, it is a 'foreign devil' who is accused of these practices ;

Vampires can command the lower animals and assume their shape at will, a link with the were-animal myths which points to 'totemism' and to erroneous reports about foreigners. As we have seen, were-animals and vampires are believed in most firmly in districts where dissimilar races are in contact ;

Malarial fevers produce delirious visions and anaemia, and are often carried to the patient through the bite of blood-sucking insects. The small punctured wounds made by 'vampires' may, after all, be such prosaic things as mosquito bites !

The nocturnal habits of vampires and other spectres may be connected with the helpless feeling imposed on one by darkness ; with dreams about the dead, as mentioned above ; and with the mists which gather at sunset and are dispersed at sunrise. The sun is universally the emblem of life and joy, the conqueror of chills and fogs and horrid visions ;

People of strong personality often seem, in a vague way, to 'pervade' the places which they formerly frequented. Even European doctors are beginning to notice that some persons have an exhausting effect upon those with whom they come in contact ; such persons are called 'psychic sponges,' and unconsciously practise a kind of mental vampirism.

From the above general considerations, and in view of the credulous, imaginative nature of the Chinese, I submit that a belief in vampires is not so surprising as it might be in other countries.

The white or greenish-white hair on Chinese vampires is attributed by Dr. de Groot to the fungi which flourish on the cotton grave-clothes used in



China; the notion that vampires can fly, like other demons and spectres, calls for no comment. The fresh appearance attributed to certain corpses long after death (giving rise to the charge of vampirism) may be due to the great thickness and airtight joints of really well-made Chinese coffins, or to some peculiarity of the diet, physique, or habits of the deceased.

The Chinese have a curious idea that the *amount* of life upon the earth is kept at a constant level through the operations of Nature, by means of reincarnation. As deaths occur, so births make up for them, either by the immediate transfer of a dead man's soul to a baby, or by the allotting to one about to be born, of a soul which has just finished a 'term' of purgatory in 'human' or other form.

Now, European vampires are supposed to 'infect' their victims in such a way that a person who dies of a vampire's bite becomes himself a vampire, thus keeping up the supply of cannibal demons; and as disease has everywhere, at one time or another, been attributed to devils, the distinction between inoculation and obsession will either have been unknown, or ignored as negligible. The septic bite of a delirious savage is no light matter; and another possible link between fact and folk-lore may, perhaps, be found in this unpleasant, but purely natural way of transmitting disease. Further, if the savage be a foreigner and *ipso facto* a 'devil,' what else could be expected of him?

As vampirism, like other folk-beliefs, is probably based upon one or more garbled facts, I venture, with due diffidence, to add the above suggestions to any that may have been made hitherto as to the possible origin of this repulsive conception.

## X

### THE SPIRITS OF INANIMATE OBJECTS

A TYPE of spectre markedly characteristic of Chinese folk-lore is the ghost of a tree, of an object made of wood or rope, or even of an inorganic substance, such as stone.

We have seen how thoroughly the folk-lore of Eastern Asia ignores the distinctions between one kind of life and another. The sovereign dual soul—Yang-Yin—pervades the Universe in constantly varying proportions; the ‘belief in the animation of lifeless things,’ to quote the learned Dr. de Groot, ‘follows, rationally and logically,’ from the Chinese conception of ‘life’ in men, animals and plants.

Tree-worship existed in pre-Christian Scandinavia as well as in China; sacred groves were common to Britain, Syria, Italy and Greece. Magical and auspicious plants, as drugs or for ritual use, are heard of all over the world. A Japanese superstition held that, after dark, some trees were able to pull up their roots and move about; New Zealand mythology says that when the gods made men, they planted some of them in the earth upside-down, their hair becoming roots and their limbs branches. In a Hungarian fairy-tale, the Princess Hajnalka, having been murdered by her wicked sisters, became one with the willow-tree in which her body was hidden; and in another from the same country, a beautiful princess and her companions, who had been turned into trees by enchantment, were set free by Prince Aba.

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Wooden and other inanimate articles which are old, have partly decayed, or have been in any way connected with funeral rites, became goblins of a special type called Mei, and are more powerful and mischievous than one would expect. The same is true of grotesque roots, knots and misshapen growths in or upon trees ; these are regarded as nuclei or concentrations of the tree's soul, and have uncanny qualities even when separated from it.

A Chinese tale, perhaps a thousand years old, tells of a withered, dried-up cypress which stood within a sacrificial space dedicated to the Earth, upon the ' Hill of Kites and Crows.' Beside it there stood another cypress, which was always fresh and green ; the dead one was possessed by a spirit, so that it never rotted, but stood unchanged for a long period of years. Everyone who damaged the dried tree came to harm, and even incurred death. People warned one another to avoid the place. (History of the T'ang Dynasty.)

Another story of early date describes a tree which took ten persons to compass it with their arms. For acres around it no corn would grow. When men were sent to fell it, blood gushed from the trunk, and the men ran back, panic-stricken, to the owner of the land. ' Nonsense ! ' he cried. ' It was merely the sap flowing out ! ' He then went with his men and made a second attack on the tree ; with his own eyes he saw a broad stream of blood flow from it. So he told his men to lop off the branches ; whereupon, the removal of some of the limbs laid bare a large hole, from which a grey-bearded goblin emerged. This being assaulted the owner, who beat him off, and, moreover, killed four other goblins who came out of the tree, while his labourers lay flat on the earth in terror. When he inspected the bodies of the goblins, he found that they were ' neither brute nor human.' He then felled the tree without any further mishap, and grew excellent

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corn, in great quantities, in the field around the site of the manifestation. (*Fêng Su T'ung I.*)

During the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368-1644) it is related that a student was busy with his reading at a place near the Southern altar of his district city. One evening he saw a very beautiful girl standing in a tree. His fellow-students, eighteen in number, were very frightened, but the hero of the story was quite unperturbed. In a few moments the girl disappeared, so he took a knife and wrote the following, in large characters, on the bark of the tree: 'May wind and thunder split this evil apparition! May axe and saw reduce its material shape to fragments!' The following midnight the tree was struck by lightning and destroyed. (*Kuang Shou Chi.*)

Trees planted on graves, as one may expect, are in close union with the souls of those buried beneath them. There are many European tales of this character; in China, the plant-spirits often have animal forms, or appear as goblins of different kinds, and their connection with the dead is detailed clearly in visions or other manifestations.

Over two thousand years ago, a military officer, separated during years of warfare from his wife, found on returning home that she had died of grief, thinking always of him. A tree had grown out of her grave, and all its branches turned towards the land where he had served for so many long years. The people called it 'The Tree of Remembrance.'

A certain Li Ching, who studied Taoist lore for seventeen years under one of the Kings of the Immortals and Fairies, eventually died and was buried at Wu Ling. A flowering tree shot up from his tomb; all who beheld its flowers became clever and intelligent, and acquired a high capacity for literary work. (*Kuei Chi.*)

For some reason not clear to the foreign mind, Chinese tree-spirits are fond of assuming the form of a bull.

Some two thousand years ago a large *rottlera* tree stood in the mountains, south of Yung.

Whenever the Ruler attacked it with axes, a violent wind blew, rain fell, and the rent in the tree made by the axes closed of itself. One night a sick man, wandering on the mountains in the dark, heard a spectre say to the tree-spirit, 'If the Ruler sends a man with dishevelled hair and bids him wind red silk thread around your tree before hacking at it with axes, how will you fare?' The tree-spirit had nothing to say to this. Next day the sick man told his tale to the Ruler, who felled the tree. A blue bull rushed out of it, fled to the river and plunged in. When it came out again, horsemen set upon it and attacked it, but without success. At last, one of the attackers, after falling from his horse, remounted, with his hair in disorder, and renewed his onslaught on the blue bull. The creature was intimidated at the sight of the dishevelled man, as described to it by the spectre, plunged into the river and disappeared. A long-haired head (presumably carved on a tablet, or in the round) was erected on the spot, and for centuries after sacrifices were offered to the bull-spirit of the big *rottlera* tree. (*Luh-i Chuan.*)

During the twelfth century B.C., there grew by the walls of the city of Yung Chou, on the southern side, a very large Shên (spirit) tree. It cast its shade a *li* (one-third of a mile) around; goats were sacrificed to it, and libations of wine; many people worshipped it year after year.

One day the King, Wu the Great, seeing crowds of people sacrificing to the tree, said, 'Who is this tree-spirit? I am sure it inflicts evil on my people.' So he ordered his soldiers to surround the spirit-tree, and

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begin felling it. But flying gravel, running rocks and thunder and lightning, evoked by the spirit, drove the soldiers back, and nothing would make them approach the tree. One man, who was wounded in the leg, was unable to run away, and passed the following night lying on the ground, within a hundred paces of the haunted tree. About nightfall, a rider dressed in red came up and said to the tree-spirit, 'Did King Wu's attack on you this morning have any bad effect?' 'I am the Lord of Thunder,' replied the tree-spirit. 'I scattered the soldiers with flying sand and stones; sheer terror drove them back.' So the rider in red said, in an angry tone, 'I will tell the soldiers to loosen their hair, paint their faces red, put on red clothes, and tie a red string round the tree. Then, if they strew a hundred rings of ashes on the sand and attack your tree with axes, what will happen to you?' The tree-spirit gave no answer, and the man in red rode off.

At daybreak the soldier told his tale to the village elders, and they reported it to King Wu. He took the advice of the rider in red, and felled the tree without mishap; but just as the trunk was about to fall, blood gushed from it and turned into a blue bull, which rushed into the river Fêng. From this people learned that ashes and the colour red are efficacious against tree-spirits. (*Sou Shên Chi.*)

The colour red is Yang, lucky and auspicious in all respects, typical of the sun, etc., and its connection with fire may also be held to frighten a spirit who lives in so inflammable an abode as a tree. A red ribbon in the cap is a Scottish precaution against witches. (H. Pease, *Border Ghost Stories.*)

Very old trees are quite naturally credited with much vital force; and if by any chance a root or any other portion of such a tree should look like a grotesque human figure, the scrapings of that portion, taken as

medicine, are of magical efficacy. Negro witch-doctors sell to their dupes roots of grotesquely human form as charms.

Ko Hung, a Taoist adept of the fourth century A.D., taught that, among the big trees which grow in the hills, some can talk. It was not the trees themselves which had that faculty, however, it was their Ching ('vital disposition,' 'informing spirit'), which was of the Yang order; namely, a Shên or good spirit.

The deepest root of a cypress a thousand years old, he wrote, had the shape of a manikin in a seated posture, about seven inches high. If a knife were stuck into it, it would bleed, and its blood, smeared upon the soles of the feet, conferred the power of walking upon water. Smeared on the body, it rendered one invisible. Scrapings of dust from the manikin's body would cure illness of the corresponding part of the human body. If the whole manikin were pounded into powder, and the powder swallowed, the 'patient' would live a thousand years.

The same worthy tells us that a fir branch, three thousand years old, has a dragon-shaped deposit of resin in its bark, which lengthens life up to five hundred years if you swallow ten pounds of it; and so forth.

This particular vagary of animism partakes of the nature of what is generally called 'mimetic magic'; that is, the use of the image of anything as if it were the thing itself, or the mimicry of a desirable event in the hope of inducing it to occur. Such an attitude of mind can be traced among backward peoples all over the world; the Chinese beliefs in the transformation of one form of life into another have fostered and preserved it, side by side with an old and highly organised civilisation and a mass of philosophical literature of great merit. Truly, human nature is hopelessly inconsistent!

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Many beautiful pictures of cranes and pine-trees owe their origin to the idea that very old pines sometimes turn into cranes. A book of the Han Period mentions this as an established tradition; and cranes often figure in Taoist pictures as the familiars of various Hsien or immortalised sages.

During the Chêng Yüan period (A.D. 785-805), a man called Têng Kuei stayed for a time in a Buddhist monastery beyond the pasture-grounds adjoining a certain city. One autumn evening, a party of friends were with him, the door of his room being closed. Suddenly a thin, yellow arm came in through the window. All except Kuei were startled, especially as the arm was accompanied by the sound of a shrill voice.

‘Who are you?’ said Kuei.

The being replied, ‘For more than a year I have lived in a glen close by; this evening, while taking a walk in the moonlight, I heard you and your friends conversing, and came to see you. I am unworthy to intrude, so I ask permission to sit outside your window and listen to the conversation.’

Kuei agreed, so they all talked and joked together for a long time. Then the stranger announced that he must go, and said, ‘I’m coming again to-morrow night, and I hope I shall not be unwelcome.’

When he had gone, Kuei said to his friends, ‘This is surely a ghost; we must be careful.’ So he took some silk and twisted it into a long string, in order to bind the spectre if it came again. Next night, when the lean arm was thrust through the window, Kuei tied the string tightly round it.

‘What harm have I done you,’ asked a voice from outside the window, ‘that you should tie me up?’ Then the creature ran off, the string trailing after it. Next morning Kuei and his friends traced the string to a very luxuriant creeper; the string was tied to a



branch, at the end of which was a leaf, the shape of a human hand. So they had the root dug up, and burned it. (*Hsüan Shih Chi.*)

Another tale, of about the same period, tells of a military officer, Shih Tsung Wu, whose family all suffered from a very malignant and painful disease. Every night the form of a man, surrounded by bright light, would enter his house, and as soon as the shape entered all the patients felt their sufferings increase.

So one night Tsung Wu got his bow and arrows ready, and waited for the demon. It arrived suddenly; but Tsung Wu at once drew his bow and shot it, knocking a shower of sparks from its body. He then called for torches, and found he had hit a very old camphorwood candlestick, which had been in the family for many years. The candlestick was chopped up and burnt, and the ashes thrown into a river; and the family were immediately cured. (*Kuei-lin Fêng T'u Chi.*)

The idea that a demon can harm a man more when it knows his name is made clear in the following story of a Mei.

In A.D. 424, a crab-fisher of the Wang clan had a crab-trap in a dry creek, and went out one morning to look at it. He found a small block of wood in the trap, and noticed that a hole had been made, through which the crabs had evidently escaped. He repaired his trap, and threw the block of wood away on the bank; but next morning it was back again, and the trap had a hole in it as before. As this happened several days running, he thought the lump of wood must have something to do with it, so he put the block in a crab-basket, closed and fastened the lid, and started off home. During the journey he heard something moving in the basket, and when he looked in, there was a creature with one hand and one foot, a body like

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a monkey, and a human face. The creature said, 'I am a hill-devil; I am very fond of crabs, and I have been robbing your trap. If you forgive me and let me out, I will make amends by helping you to catch big crabs.' Wang refused, telling the creature he was sure that that was not the only evil it did. Again and again it begged for its freedom, but Wang simply made no reply. Then the creature began pestering the fisherman to tell it his name, but still Wang held his peace. As they neared the home, Wang heard it muttering, 'He won't let me out or tell me his name. What can I do? If only he answers, he will die.' Wang lit a fire and burned the thing, and it gave no more trouble. The neighbours said it was a hill-demon; if it had heard Wang's name, it would have had the power to destroy him, and thus regain its own freedom. (*Sou Shên Hou Chi*.)

The Chinese believe that if a ghost or demon can succeed in destroying a man, it reduces him to its own condition, and is thereby enabled to pass into a human frame; from the Buddhist notion that every kind of spectre, devil, etc., only serves a term in that condition, and, when fate ordains it, is transferred to another state.

Liu Hsüan, of Yueh, was surprised one evening, after sunset, to see a visitor, dressed in black, approaching him. He lit a torch and saw that it had no face, so that it blundered against everything in its way. He therefore consulted a soothsayer, who replied thus: 'This is a thing coeval with your ancestors; if it is allowed to exist any longer, it will become a dangerous spectre and kill men, but having no eyes yet, you may still avert its evil intentions.' Liu caught it and tied it up with a rope; then, on his striking it with his sword, it turned into a wooden pillow, of the style of his grandfather's time. (*Chi I Chi*.)

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Once upon a time a rice dealer of Kia Ling, province of Che Kiang, had to cross a yellow, muddy canal in which many persons had been suffocated. As he rode across it on his buffalo, a black hand rose from the mud to grasp his foot. As he drew up his legs, the hand seized the hoof of the buffalo, and held it fast. The rider called for help, and after much effort, the buffalo was dragged out. An old broom was found attached to its body. The broom was so putrid and offensive that it was hardly possible to approach it. When it was struck with sticks it made a moaning sound, and black blood trickled from it. Knives were brought, and the thing was cut off and burnt, but it left an evil stench for some time. Since then, no more people have been suffocated in the yellow mud canal.

Towards the end of the Liang Dynasty, an empty house in Pu Hsih Ch'ia was declared by various former occupants to be unlucky, and not habitable. One day a certain Wei Fuh T'o entered at twilight, and saw a monster with a human face and a dog's body running about. He shot an arrow at it, and it vanished. Next day the house was opened, and the arrow was found, buried in a rotten tree-stump, with some dried blood coagulated under it. Thereafter the house ceased to be haunted.

In A.D. 713, an earnest and eloquent Buddhist monk gave a course of sermons at a village called Ch'ing Yao. One morning, about dawn, he was entering the main hall of the monastery with his alms bowl, when something came down from the eaves. When he approached, he saw that it was a new-born child wrapped in the usual swaddling clothes. Very much astonished, he put it in his sleeve, and started his usual five-mile begging trip. As he walked, he noticed that his burden grew lighter; and, when he took it out and examined it, he found that it was an old, rotten broom.

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There is a Lithuanian tale of a changeling which was left by the elves in place of a stolen human baby; at cockcrow, the changeling resumed the shape of a broom. Another tale, from the same country, relates that the head of the changeling was chopped off; blood flowed, but on examination the neck was found to contain a wisp of straw instead of the usual organs.

During the period A.D. 836-841, an official of the Ho Tung district had to patrol the streets after dark. One bright moonlight night, as he passed the Ch'ing Fu monastery, he saw a man squatting, huddled up, on the ground. He was black all over, and sat quite still. The official felt uneasy, and shouted at the man several times. At last, getting no answer, he touched him on the head. The creature thereupon suddenly rose; it had a long, lean face, very terrible to behold. The official fell down with fright; and when he got up, the being had disappeared. He ran home, and told the tale of his adventure. Later on, when the monastery had a new gate fitted, the carpenters dug up from the ground a varnished barrel, with some white clay on the top of it. This was what the patrol man had seen. (*Hsüan Shih Chi.*)

The Chinese custom of erecting vertical slabs on the backs of stone tortoises, in memory of the dead, has led to some uncanny tales being told.

The tortoise is one of the mystery beasts of Chinese thought. Its immense longevity has endowed it with supernatural qualities; and many cases are cited of these mortuary-tortoises crawling about at night, and even of breaking into locked granaries and stealing the corn.

In one of Mr. Howard Pease's *Scottish Border Tales*, a man whose ancestors had been moss-trooping Maxwells strikes a blow at the stone effigy of an old Lord

Warden of the English Marches, and is himself knocked senseless by what he believes to be the insulted effigy, after dark, that very night.

Yin Ch'ien, a subordinate police official in a town in An Hwei was well known as a clever and intrepid thief-taker. Night after night he was about, hiding in dark and lonely places.

One night, wandering in the outskirts of a village, a man running, with a rope in his hand, bumped into Yin. 'Evidently a thief,' thought he; so he tracked the man to a certain house and saw him climb over the wall. 'Good idea!' thought Yin. 'Now I'll wait and catch him with his booty.' Suddenly he heard a woman scream, and jumped over the wall just in time to catch the man he had bumped into; the fellow was perched on a beam, and had caught a woman in a noose and hung her up. Yin at once understood that he must be the ghost of a suicide, trying to murder someone as a substitute for himself. Yin hurriedly broke a window and called for help, and the neighbours came in time to cut the woman down before she was quite dead. The relatives thanked Yin profusely, and insisted on his taking some refreshment before he started for home.

On his return journey, while it was still quite dark, he heard a noise behind him. He looked round, and there was the ghost with the rope. 'Why did you snatch that woman from me?' said the spectre. 'It is our right, as suicides, to try and ensnare a substitute. Why did you stop me?' Immediately the ghost attacked Yin with great ferocity, but he was cool and brave, and defended himself well. The ghost felt very cold, and smelt abominably. At last the dawn broke, the spectre's strength ebbed away, and a passer-by saw that Yin was struggling with a piece of rotten wood. 'What's that you have there?' said the new arrival.

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'The ghost must have entered this piece of wood. Anyhow, I shall not let it go.' When Yin reached home he nailed the lump of rotten wood to a beam in his courtyard. After that, he heard piteous howlings in the yard, and other voices muttering words of consolation. 'If he had tied you up instead of nailing you,' said one voice, 'you would have suffered much more.' 'Be quiet!' said another voice. 'Your tormentor will hear you!' 'Very well,' thought Yin, 'I'll tie him up.' He did so the next morning, and the following night no more voices were heard.

The next day the lump of rotten wood had vanished.

There once lived in Peking two friends, Hsiung, an historiographer, and Chuang, a magistrate. They mostly spent their evenings together, one night in Hsiung's house and another in Chuang's.

One night they were taking their wine together at Chuang's, when the host was urgently called away, while Hsiung sat and waited for his return. To pass the time, he poured himself out a cup of wine—and suddenly it vanished. He took another cup and filled it. A blue hand came from under the table and seized the cup. Hsiung was startled, and stood up; whereupon a tall devil, all blue from head to foot, came from under the table. Hsiung called for help, but two servants, who ran into the room, saw nothing. The blue devil had vanished. Shortly afterwards Chuang came back, and made fun of Hsiung. 'I bet,' said he, 'that you would not dare pass the night here!' 'Why not?' said Hsiung. So he prepared a couch and some bedclothes, and fetched his sword. This weapon had belonged to a Tartar general, and had served him well in a campaign in the Ko-Ko-Nor country. Chuang wished him good-night and left him.

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The autumn wind rustled, the moon gave a pale light, and a small lamp burned behind a green curtain, which shaded Hsiung's couch. He did not expect to be undisturbed, and lay awake.

Suddenly an empty winecup fell on the table, and then a second one. 'Hullo, he's returning the empties!' thought Hsiung. Immediately after, a blue leg came through the eastern window, then an arm, an eye, an ear, half a mouth and half a nose. Through the western window came, at the same time, the other half of the mouth and of the nose, and a second ear, eye and blue leg. They met in the middle of the room and joined together. The blue devil glared angrily at Hsiung, while an icy wind shook the curtain. Hsiung brandished his sword, and made a dash at the demon, dealing it a heavy blow on the arm. The devil jumped out of the window, Hsiung after it. He had nearly reached it, when the demon dodged behind a cherry-tree. Hsiung then went back to bed. Next morning Chuang, on his way to the room where Hsiung had spent the night, was seriously alarmed to see a track of blood in the garden. Hsiung, who was quite unhurt, related his adventure. Chuang had the cherry-tree cut down and chopped to pieces; and every piece of its wood smelt of wine.

In the year A.D. 967, when Liu Wei was Prefect of Lu Chou, An Hwei, he was transferred to another province.

As soon as he left, fires broke out all over the prefecture.

Every night mysterious creatures were seen flitting about with torches in their hands. They were never actually captured, but were sometimes brought down by a well-directed arrow. They were then found to be old coffin-planks, rotten beams, old brooms, and so forth. The result was a serious panic, which lasted

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several months. At last, a Mr. Chang Tsung was made Prefect, and the trouble ceased immediately.

Spontaneous combustion of organic refuse may account for the connection, firmly believed in by the Chinese, between rotten wood and incendiary fires. In some instances, rotten wood is slightly phosphorescent; and all articles made of dry, seasoned wood are inflammable.

A curious superstition is said to exist among a hill-tribe in India, who formerly offered human victims to sacred trees. The British Government forbade these human sacrifices, and from that date any fire that occurred in the villages of that tribe was put down to the revengeful tree-spirits, deprived of their accustomed blood-offerings.

In the days of the Emperor Kao Tsung<sup>1</sup> of the Yin Dynasty, a mulberry tree and a paper-mulberry tree grew together in the courtyard of the palace. In the space of a week they grew so thick that they required two hands to span them. An Augur was asked what this meant, and he said that the omen typified the downfall of the dynasty, as 'wild plants were growing in the court.' The Emperor at once gave himself assiduously to affairs of state, and put his house in order. The two trees died, and the Emperor enjoyed one hundred years of happiness.

In the T'ai Ho Period (A.D. 827-836), mysterious things happened in the house of a minor official called Ch'iang Hsin. Night after night a giant appeared, black and shining; and those who saw him fell ill and died.

One evening Hsü Yüan Ch'ang, an able exorcist, brought some written charms with him, and sat waiting under the western balcony. The giant appeared, so Yüan Ch'ang seized a charm and threw it at the

<sup>1</sup> Posthumous name of Wu Ting.



spectre ; it struck his arm with a sound as of cutting, and the arm fell to the ground. The giant ran away, and Yüan Ch'ang saw that the severed arm was the branch of a tree. Next day a servant ran in, crying, 'There is a charm sticking to the dead tree by the north-east corner of the hall !' So they ran out, and saw a severed branch lying beside the tree. The tree was cut down and burnt, and the manifestations ceased.

At a slightly earlier date than that above-named, an old house stood near Lo Yang, by the eastern Lo River, having a spacious hall and living-room decorated with perforated masonry. Many people had died violent deaths in the house, and it was locked up and unoccupied. A Censor named Lu Ch'ien was appointed to Lo Yang, and wanted to buy the house. He was informed that it was haunted, but replied, 'I can put a stop to that myself.'

So one night he lay down to sleep in the hall, with one attendant, and told his other servants to stay just outside the gate. His attendant, a brave man and an expert archer, had his bow and arrows ready by the window.

At the dead of night a knocking was heard at the gate. The attendant asked who was there, and a voice replied, 'A messenger has come from the Commander Yang (*i.e.* Willow) to the Censor Lu.' Lu made no reply, so a letter was thrust through the perforated brickwork. It ran thus : 'I have dwelt here a year ; the hall and living-room are my dwelling ; the spirits of this gate and these doors are my subordinates ; is it then just and right of you, Sir, to intrude into my house ? If you had a house and I entered it, would you approve of that ? You do not fear me, but should you not feel ashamed ? Make haste and begone, unless you wish to bring destruction on yourself !'

As soon as the letter had been read it dispersed in the air like flying ashes. Then a loud voice cried,

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'The Commander Willow desires to call upon the Censor Lu !' and, behold, there in the courtyard stood an immensely tall spectre, holding a gourd in its hand. The attendant drew his bow with all his strength, and an arrow hit the gourd. The spectre vanished, leaving the gourd behind.

After a time the spectre returned, stooped, and peered through the perforated brickwork, showing a very strange face. The attendant shot again, and this time hit it in the chest. It made off in an easterly direction, and next morning, when its footprints were traced, they led to a willow-tree over a hundred feet high, with an arrow sticking in it. This was evidently the 'Commander Willow'; so Lu had the tree cut down for fuel, and the house was haunted no longer.

Later on, when the roof was being repaired, a gourd was found under the tiles, with an arrow sticking in its handle. This was the gourd which the spectre had carried in its hand.

It is hard to account for the malevolence attributed to these spirits of trees and other wooden objects, some of which have no connection with funerals, and do not show their malice by acts of incendiarism. It will be noticed that the letter written by the willow-tree spectre to the Censor Lu vanished as soon as it was read; a peculiarity sometimes attributed to articles which 'materialise' at a spiritualistic séance.

The stories next quoted deal with objects used in funeral rites, and images of men and animals.

An elderly official retired to his native place, T'ai Yüan, Shan Si, and made his home on some land to northward of the city.

The district was said to be haunted, especially during thick fogs following rain, by a mysterious being. Many people who saw it died of fright, and a reward was offered to anyone who would undertake to lay the

spectre. Nobody cared to try, so the brave old gentleman volunteered. One evening he went out in the hope of meeting the spectre, and saw it the moment it appeared. He at once discharged an arrow, which hit it. The creature fled, and the official gave chase, shooting two more arrows at it. It flung itself over a precipice. The old gentleman went home victorious, and a feast was given in his honour. The next day they found, at the foot of the precipice, a Fang Hsiang Shê; that is, a paper image of the kind generally carried in funeral processions. The hauntings stopped.

[Any object used in a funeral procession runs the risk of absorbing the evil influences it is intended to keep at bay, and is likely to have uncanny properties afterwards. It is usual to burn these effigies, etc., partly because burning sends them to the spirit-land, there to be of service to the dead, and partly because they are not very pleasant things to leave lying about.]

The following story illustrates the same superstition.

During the fifth century A.D. a certain student travelled a long way from home in order to study under a celebrated master.

One night, while his parents were sitting round the fire, the young man suddenly appeared to them, and said, 'I am no longer alive. My soul is now speaking to you. I fell ill a month ago, and died to-day. Mr. Jen Tzŭ Ch'êng, of Shan Tung, is attending to my funeral. To-morrow he will put me in the coffin, and I have come to ask you to be present at the ceremony.'

'It is a thousand *li* from here,' said the parents. 'How can we reach the place in time?'

'There is a carriage waiting at the door,' said the soul of their son. 'Come at once, and you will be in good time.'

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The parents got into the carriage, and immediately became very sleepy. At cock-crow they arrived at the place where the Shan Tung man was holding the funeral ceremony for their son. When they examined the carriage in which they had taken their rapid flight, they saw it was a paper carriage, harnessed to a wooden horse, of the kind generally offered and burnt at funerals. They wept over the body of their son, thanked his friend the Shan Tung man, and verified every detail related to them by the soul of their son.

A number of superstitious tales—some grotesque, others pathetic—are told of images which have acted as living things.

A faithful and affectionate widow had a clay image made to represent her deceased husband, and was rewarded by the image coming to life. The memorial picture of a beautiful girl who died in the flower of her youth made such an impression on a young man that he became ill with love-sickness; eventually she returned to this world, and they were married and lived happily ever after.

A wooden or clay horse, under the influence of magical spells, may carry its rider immense distances.

The wooden and plaster images of minor deities, heroes, and so forth, in the temples are often referred to as moving, talking, visiting people in dreams, and actually feasting and drinking with them in their waking hours; but always, or nearly always, between sundown and cock-crow.

Near an old tomb at Lin I Hsien, Shan Tung, there is a stone tortoise which formerly had one of the customary tall mortuary-tablets standing upright on its back. Tortoises love the water, and this particular stone tortoise used to crawl every night, with the tablet on its back, into the river adjoining and take a bath. Often, in the morning, it was noticed that the

creature's back was covered with water-weeds. On one occasion a passer-by surprised the tortoise, and it threw down the tablet and made off. Next day the tablet was found lying on the ground, broken.

A very old bridge in Ho Nan used to be called the Children's Bridge, because it was ornamented with stone figures of children. As time went on, these figures became magically alive, and used to romp about the adjoining town after dark, knocking at doors and generally making a disturbance. One night some men lay in wait for them as they climbed off the bridge for their nocturnal frolic, and severed their heads with sword-cuts. The manifestations then ceased.

A tenth century narrative presents the view that the votive figures buried in ancient tombs acquired a sort of uncanny 'life.'

The custom of burying useful objects, or human effigies, for the use and comfort of the dead in their after state is world-wide. Sometimes the articles are very small; sometimes they are deliberately broken and 'killed,' as it were, so as to accompany the dead to their own place; sometimes they are very precious, at others as cheap as possible.

Now, in the story here paraphrased, a merchant on a business journey met a stranger and travelled with him for some days. One day the stranger suddenly turned to him, saying, 'I am a Kuei. We are about to pass my grave. Will you do me a service?'

'I will, if it is in my power,' replied the merchant. 'What is it?'

The Kuei replied, 'A number of objects have been buried with my body. They quarrel night and day, and give me no rest. When you get near my grave, I beg that you will kindly announce, in a loud voice, "The Emperor has condemned all this gold and silver rabble to be beheaded!"'

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The merchant agreed, and presently they reached a sumptuous tomb, into which the Kuei retired. The merchant pronounced the decree, as requested by the Kuei, at the top of his voice, and presently was heard, inside the tomb, the dull sound of an executioner's sword, hacking away for quite a considerable time. Then the Kuei reappeared and presented the merchant with an armful of gold and silver images of men and horses, all without heads. 'Take these as a token of my gratitude,' said the Kuei. 'The proceeds will keep you in comfort for the rest of your days.'

In due course the merchant tried to sell some of the figures, but rumours got about that he had been rifling a tomb, and he had to explain how he had obtained them. The Prefect, on hearing of it, had the tomb opened, and found several hundred more images of the same kind, and all beheaded !

The commentator adds that, had it not been for the statement that the Emperor had condemned them to be beheaded, the little metal figures would have defended themselves ; but earthly potentates inspire respect, even among the dead, in China. There, as in Christian countries, properly constituted authority is held to represent, within its sphere, the authority of Heaven ; and the Chinese are so thoroughly convinced of this that they have been called, by some investigators, the most easily governed of all peoples.

Under ordinary conditions, offences which in other countries would be punished by the tribunals of the Government are summarily dealt with in China by the headmen of clans or villages in accordance with ancient customary law ; only brigands, pirates, rebels and kidnappers of children are handed over to the authorities, and nobody cares how harshly they are treated.

During the magic-ridden T'ang Period, a large number of images seem to have been interred with the dead. Some of these have been brought to Europe ;

they are mostly of clay, and are full of vigour. The horses, especially, are better modelled than any except the finest of later production; and the soldiers with bulls' or demons' heads, and the grotesque earth-spirits, show an excellent grasp of the technique of clay-modelling.

The Chinese are averse to interfering with tombs, as anyone who glances at this book will readily understand; and there is no knowing what historic treasures may still lie hidden in the millions of graves scattered over that vast country, awaiting the cutting of canals, the laying of railways, or some such fortunate accident. It is very annoying to hear of the vandalism of the Kuei, in our story, who had so many rare and interesting objects broken!

The literate Ch'iang, being on a journey, stopped at an inn for the night. He noticed a nice clean room on the western side of the house, and took a fancy to it.

'Will you risk it?' said the innkeeper. 'That room is not always quiet enough at night for a bedroom.'

'I am not afraid,' said Ch'iang. Nevertheless, he sat up for a time, and did not put out his light.

Suddenly he heard the sound of something stirring under the table, and a procession of little goblins, three inches high, came out of the ground. On seeing him, they whispered together for a while, and then withdrew. Presently he heard a fresh noise, and a mandarin of the same size, with banners, attendants, horses and carriages came out of the earth. He sat down and began abusing Ch'iang with threatening gestures. His voice was no louder than the buzzing of a wasp. At last, as Ch'iang seemed to take no notice, he flew into a passion, stamped on the ground, and ordered his goblins to seize the intruder. The

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pygmies pulled off Ch'iang's boots, and then his stockings ; but they were unable to do any more. So the little mandarin came towards Ch'iang to attack him in person. Ch'iang lifted him up very carefully and put him on the table. The pygmy at once became silent and immovable, and, on examination, proved to be one of those grotesque little figures with weighted bases, which bob up again when they are pushed over !

Then the following of tiny goblins begged Ch'iang to restore their master to them. ' You must ransom him for a good round sum,' said Ch'iang. They vanished, and there was heard a buzzing and droning in the walls of the room. When they came back, some brought a hairpin, others a brooch, and so on, until the floor of the room was littered with jewels. Then Ch'iang set the image free ; and at once it resumed the form of a mandarin, and went off in state with its retinue.

The rest of the night was quiet.

Next morning the innkeeper was heard making a great clamour about his jewels, which had all been stolen in the night.

Ch'iang then understood where they had come from, and restored them to their owner.

The Chinese story-teller gives no explanation of this tale ; but the interest which the dwarfs took in metal objects reminds one of the connection, in European fairy-tales, between dwarfs and the precious ores and stones found in the earth, of which they are the reputed guardians.

Chih Tu was a general under the Han Emperor, who in 142 B.C. made an attack upon the Hsiung Nu (Huns), and was a man of great courage and sternness of character. When he died, a wooden effigy of him was erected on the border ; and the Huns are said to



have been much afraid of it. They shot arrows at it, but legend recounts that no arrow ever hit the image.

In many parts of China a clay ox is still fabricated and carried about in procession in the springtime. Some explain the ritual as being intended to 'drive away the cold air,' or 'inclement influences'; others, that the figure of the beast used for ploughing is 'to exhort the common people to be industrious.' The former explanation—that it is an act of simple magic, similar to corresponding rituals practised elsewhere—is the more reasonable of the two.

The celebrated artist, Ku K'ai Chih, who flourished in the fourth century A.D., first attracted notice by a portrait of a girl with whom he was in love.

According to the popular legend, he pierced the picture with a thorn in the region of the girl's heart; at once she felt a pain, which was not relieved until the thorn was removed from the picture. We are told that the great artist's suit was successful.

Wu Tao Tzŭ, a painter of even higher repute, painted an extensive landscape on the wall of the palace of Ming Huang (eighth century A.D.). The finished work was concealed by curtains, which were drawn aside when the Emperor came to view the masterpiece. While the Son of Heaven was feasting his eyes upon it, Wu Tao Tzŭ, pointing to a certain part of the painting, said, 'Look at this cave, at the mountain's foot—it is the dwelling of a spirit,' and, clapping his hands, he caused the gates of a cavern to open in the mountain side. 'Will your Majesty follow me within, and let me exhibit its marvels?' So he stepped in, and before the astonished Emperor could follow at his beckoning the cave closed, the mountain vanished, and the whole scene faded away, leaving a blank wall.

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Wu Tao Tzū was never seen again.

This parable was evidently written to show how an artist may be identified with and absorbed by his work. The element of magic, the hint at the illusion and impermanence of human handiwork, point to the influence of Buddhism.

In the Tartar city, Peking, stands a small shrine in honour of Erh Lang. It is a Taoist shrine founded in the T'ang period, and much frequented by owners of sick pet dogs.

At one time a butcher owned a thriving business nearby. One morning he noticed that the best piece of meat on his stall, left there overnight, had disappeared; and the same thing happened morning after morning. His son, suspecting theft, watched one night, knife in hand; and about midnight he saw a yellow dog trying to steal a succulent piece of fresh meat. He stabbed at the animal, and it disappeared, but left a blood-track leading to a crevice in a locked door.

Next morning he traced the blood marks to the Erh Lang Miao (Temple); and on entering he was deeply shocked to see that the effigy of the dog, lying at the feet of Erh Lang's statue, had a deep gash in it. From that time his business languished, and by degrees his family were reduced to beggary.

The birthday of Erh Lang, 'Prince of the Heavenly Tao,' is celebrated by the populace of Peking on the third day of the second lunar month.

Millet, the most important, next to rice, of the five food-grains of China, was formerly worshipped as an embodiment of an exalted personage of the early mythical period, who was a Director of Agriculture in the twenty-eighth century B.C. This legend may be compared with Longfellow's story of Mondamin, the Maize God, in *Hiawatha*.

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

The famous 'ginseng,' although in great vogue with the Chinese as a medicine, is even more remarkable as a nucleus of weird fancies.

It comes from the North-Western part of China, Manchuria and Korea, and has been in favour as a drug for at least fifteen hundred years. Ginseng was described in old medical books as possessing 'the vital energy of the soil,' and it has a forked root which gives it a vague likeness to a human form. It has a dual soul, like a man, and sometimes, when ginseng seekers dig their hoes into the ground, above its roots, the wailing of the root, like that of a child, is heard, coming from the earth.

In the reign of Kao Tsu (A.D. 589-605) of the Sui Dynasty, the inmates of a house in the ginseng district of the North-West heard a man calling out, behind the house, at night-time. No man was found to account for the noise; but eventually, nearly a mile off, a large ginseng plant was discovered, whose root, when dug up, was over five feet long, and was shaped exactly like a man. After the plant was removed, the noises ceased.

This 'mandrake' or man-shaped plant is believed in China to cure practically every ill of soul and body, and even to be affiliated to one of the stars of the Great Bear group. On account of its human form, childless people eat it in the hope of securing the supreme earthly bliss of a Chinese married couple—numerous offspring.

The preparation of the divining blocks used by Wu in obtaining answers from gods or spirits is an apt illustration of the Chinese belief in the vitality of inanimate objects.

A kidney-shaped piece of bamboo root, six or eight inches long, is split longitudinally, so that each half has one flat and one convex side. Bamboo is a Yang plant, full of Shên or spiritual 'life'; and its root,

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which generally throws out several stems, is emblematic of intense vitality and fertility.

The blocks are spiritually 'seasoned' by leaving them habitually lying on the altar of the deity before whom the lots are cast, and by frequently passing them through incense smoke.

The question is asked, before the image, in a form requiring a plain 'yes' or 'no'; the blocks, flat side up, are then lifted towards the image, and dropped on the floor. If both of them are found to have fallen with the convex side up, it is a 'double Yin'; with both flat sides up, 'a double Yang'; with one flat and one convex side up, a 'true,' 'wise,' or 'perfect' answer.

It is related that, in ancient times, divining blocks were made of jade; but the word 'jade' is so widely applied to precious or semi-precious stones that it may mean that they were made of costly materials.

A twelfth-century writer says that mussel-shells were sometimes used; the actual date when this method of divination became common is not known, but the mention of mussel-shells would seem to indicate the survival of a prehistoric custom.

The consumption of shell-fish, and the use of shells as receptacles or cutting implements, is known to have been prevalent at a very low stage of human progress.

The superphysical powers attributed to plants and lifeless objects link themselves logically with the lucky or unlucky configuration of rocks, hills, and water-courses. The importance of one's 'environment,' from the magical point of view, has given rise to a school of geomancy which is, perhaps, the most obstinate enemy of progress to be found in China. The lore of 'fêng shui,' as it is called (literally, 'wind and water'), will be considered in the next chapter.



## XI

### FÈNG SHUI

*wind and water*

It is impossible to come into contact, however remote, with Chinese folk-lore without encountering some phase of the widespread belief in 'Fêng Shui.'

These two words, literally 'wind' and 'water,' comprise all that we understand by 'climate' and much more besides. The supposed effects of environment, in the widest sense of the word, upon the dead and the living have been observed—in a highly unscientific spirit—and have become welded into a body of beliefs which enter intimately into Chinese life and thought. The result is a set of rules for the placing and erection of graves, temples, dwelling-houses and pagodas so shaped and situated as to benefit both the living and the dead, and to make the best possible use of every natural and supernatural 'feature' to that end.

The ancient Taoist and pre-Taoist teaching bade man 'live in harmony with Nature'; and the belief in the Unity of Life, and the unfathomable mystery surrounding the functioning of Yang and Yin, naturally made people anxious to find out, with the limited means of enquiry at their disposal, how best to obey this precept. Accordingly the ancient Chinese began to observe the directions of the winds, the distribution of mountains and streams (as affecting the rainfall so closely connected with them), and any other phenomenon which seemed to concern their welfare as an *agricultural community*. One cannot over-emphasise the fact that the Chinese has been a tiller of the soil

since before the dawn of history ; poets and philosophers, artists and traders, saints and sinners innumerable have crossed the stage of China's long life-drama, but the mass of the people are, and always will be, peasants and small farmers living on, wedded to, and almost worshipping the soil.

We have also to reckon with the doctrine that one of the 'souls' of a human being remains in the grave, at any rate for some time after death ; and that another kind of 'soul' dwells in the memorial tablets erected upon small altars in domestic shrines, or in family temples specially built for them. The Fêng Shui of the sites of these altars, as well as of the graves, intimately concerns the happiness of the deceased and their ability to help their living descendants. (The two fundamental souls, the Hun and the P'o, are apparently believed to be divisible, or to abide in more places than one at the same time. A variety of opinions about 'multiple' souls can be found to prevail in different parts of China.)

For many reasons, therefore, one expects unbounded—if untrained—curiosity about weather and water supply in a land of widely-differing climates and extremes of heat and cold.

We may now sketch—thanks to the painstaking researches of Dr. Eitel and Dr. de Groot—a few of the precautions which Fêng Shui 'science' prescribes in the all-important selection of an auspicious site for a grave.

A sloping hillside is the favourite spot, when it is obtainable.

The grave of anyone who can afford to have it so arranged is surrounded by a wall shaped like the Greek capital Omega  $\Omega$ , the closed end towards the hilltop, and the opening towards the lower ground. If the hilly ground above the closed end is itself a 'fork,' or a slope enclosed by a peak at the top and by rising

slopes, like walls, at the sides—but open towards the lower ground—the protection from bad Fêng or inauspicious aerial influences is ideal.

A break or gully in the surrounding heights is neutralised, as far as possible, by an artificial cairn erected on a line between the gap and the grave wall; the best position for the cairn being chosen, for an appropriate fee, by the Fêng Shui expert. Where no ridges or mountains can be utilised, a wall of earth is raised around the closed part of the grave wall, above and outside the place where the coffin—its feet towards the opening of the ‘Omega’—lies buried.

The outward turns of the open ends of the wall are supposed to deflect the winds which blow round it, and prevent their getting inside the  $\Omega$ . As the opening should face south whenever it is at all possible—to admit light, heat, soft rain, and warm wind—no object tall enough to be obstructive should be ‘in front’ of a grave; that is, directly opposite and close to the southern opening in the wall.

The winds, one must on no account forget, affect the rainfall, and hence the crops; so the souls of the dead, if made properly comfortable, will see that their descendants enjoy the right kind of weather for their farms and gardens.

A watercourse should not run straight in the direction of a temple, dwelling-house or tomb. To place a building in the way of the water is a slight to it, and its spiritual influences will be revengeful instead of kindly. A stream which flows down beside a grave and past the ‘front’ of it is of good omen; but the part of the stream which skirts the open side of the grave-enclosure should not be too near. If it is, the dead will be reminded incessantly that good influences are passing away from their vicinity, and will neither derive advantage from them, nor transmit their beneficial effects to the living.

A mountain slope in front of a grave is not only of bad augury as an obstruction, but it will send down storm-water into the grave-enclosure, or in its direction. Trees, walls, and buildings should not 'face' a grave-opening, for the same reason. The ornamental perforations so frequently noticed and admired in Chinese walls are often let in at the request of someone whose family grave has, of necessity, been placed where other people's walls are opposite its 'opening,' and cannot be removed.

☯ Above and at the side of the enclosure, however, trees are encouraged, unless they 'obstruct' other grave-sites.

The water difficulty is sometimes got over by digging an artificial pond or tank in front of a grave or temple, to receive surface water from the ground above and behind the building. Care must be taken that the overflow from the tank shall not be carried off too swiftly, thus hurrying good influences away from the place. The practice of preparing a tank in front of a building is very ancient, and is not confined to China. Access to water is a *sine quâ non* for settlements of living men; doubtless the dead would be presumed—in all animistic societies—to need it also.

Dragons and clouds are embroidered upon the covers which are placed on coffins during the funeral procession; and abundant rain while the grave is being filled in is considered an excellent omen for the prosperity of the dead man's descendants.

The shape of the ground where a grave is made, apart from its effect on wind and rainfall, is important in another way. Individual hills or knolls, queerly-shaped rocks, and other local landmarks are carefully scrutinised by the wiseacres who sell their 'professional advice' to the credulous seekers after a lucky grave site.



The four points of the compass are identified with  
 The Azure Dragon in the East ;  
 The Red Bird in the South ;  
 The White Tiger in the West ; and  
 The Black Tortoise in the North, respectively.

Further, 'the winds follow the Tiger' (*I Ching*), and the waters are under the spiritual influence of the dragon. The ideal grave site, then, facing the south, should have some landmark typifying a tiger on the right (west) and a dragon on the left (east, the most honourable side). The tortoise and bird are not so important ; and the dragon is more desirable than the tiger, if one cannot have both.

For the purpose of Fêng Shui, any piece of elevated ground, or any existing pagoda, house, or tower may be declared suitable to play the part of a dragon, tiger, etc., and considerable sums of money have been spent in piling up cairns to typify the dragon or tiger, or even in erecting pagodas, if nothing else can be done to correct or improve the Fêng Shui of a town, village, or cemetery.

Undulating ground, hills with ridges branching from them like limbs—in fact, any aspect of the earth that gives to an imaginative observer an impression of life's vigour or individuality—may be taken as indicating favourable Fêng Shui. Anyone who has been in a hilly district will understand this feeling ; a 'dead' level, in our own English idiom, illustrates the converse of it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A hill with a detached boulder on top of it, to the Chinese geomancer, conveys the idea of a crushing influence keeping down good luck ; its vicinity should be avoided. A snake-like ridge with a detached rock or knoll *at one end*, however, represents a dragon with a pearl at its mouth ; such a district will be favourable to amassing wealth.

A mountain with three peaks typifies an eminent man with learned sons and grandsons ; this is the place in which an aspiring scholar should make his home.

## FÊNG SHUI

Astrology, which links the four spiritual animals or guardians of the east, south, west and north with certain constellations, is invoked by geomancers on the strength of the ancient saying, 'The stars in Heaven above and the contours of the Earth beneath correspond to one another.' Thus the door is opened to a vague mass of theorizing which it would take many volumes to elaborate.

Various mountain-forms are identified with the five elements, water, fire, wood, metal and earth; and the predominance of one or more of these primary influences in the economy of Nature may have a harmonious effect, or the reverse.

For example, 'metal' alone signified weapons; robbery, rebellion, violence generally. 'Fire,' with 'wood,' suggests conflagrations. 'Fire' and 'water,' in due proportion, are an emblem of fertility. And so on *ad infinitum*.

The eight diagrams (referred to in the chapter on Magic and Divination) can be so combined as to mean almost anything; generally speaking, the third stands for 'fire,' the fifth for 'wood' and 'air,' the sixth for 'water,' and the eighth for 'earth.' The almost incomprehensible *I Ching* is referred to at every turn by the 'professors' of Fêng Shui, and omens are deduced from it in a variety of ingenious ways. The subject is too extensive and tedious for the general reader.

Absolutely straight approaches to a tomb, such as roads or canals bearing upon them in a direct line, are much dreaded. They recall a dart, which inflicts a wound, and are also symbolical of a 'dead level,' or ground devoid of 'vital breath.'

Many cities, also, which have been sacked and devastated are supposed to owe their misfortunes to their unlucky ground-plan or to the configuration of the surrounding country.

A twelfth-century book mentions that the people of Ch'u never spoke of the 'head of a black tortoise,' because the plan of their district capital resembled the shape of the creature; and that on one occasion, when the town was attacked, a soothsayer advised the enemy to 'bind the head of the animal,' and thus ensure the success of the siege.

Allied to geomancy or Fêng Shui is the practice of putting symbols of good luck and wealth into graves, such as iron nails (which the Malays also consider highly auspicious), coins, and seeds such as those of hemp, grains of rice, wheat, millet, etc. From what we read of more backward communities, however, there is little doubt that food and other domestic articles were originally buried for the actual use of the dead; and the gratitude of the ghosts was expected to show itself in the shape of numerous and well-fed progeny, which is, after all, the *raison d'être* of Fêng Shui.

Omens derived from the actions of animals are often utilised in finding an auspicious burial-place.

Early in the eleventh century a certain Liang Shi, while seeking (by divination) a grave-site for his parents, was told by a man who lived on a neighbouring mountain that, only ten days before, a multitude of tortoises had brought with them a large tortoise's body and buried it on the mountain. Liang went to the place indicated, and saw there a newly-made artificial hummock. He had it dug into, and it was found to contain a dead tortoise. The tortoise being one of the 'spiritual creatures,' Liang took this to be a guiding omen; he disinterred the animal, buried it elsewhere, and laid his parents to rest where the tortoises had made their tumulus. His three sons subsequently passed their examinations with flying colours, and received high official rank.

In A.D. 951, one Nü Li, the day after his mother's

death, was much startled by the vision of a giant on the slopes of the Ya P'o mountain. He was about to run away when the giant stopped him and said, 'Bring your mother here, and you will soon be appointed to a good post at Court.' Nü Li followed the giant's advice, and he was shortly made an official of the Imperial Stud-Farm.

The *Li Chi*, or Book of Rites, mentions that the dead have their heads to the north, and the living turn their faces to the south, in accordance with usage since the beginning of things. This south-facing custom, and the seeking after warmth and moisture which prompted it, are strong evidence that the early Chinese deliberately left an arid, windy, and inclement country and moved southwards; but whether this was due to their ancestors having lived in Eastern Siberia, or to their having been driven during some 'glacial' period to a warmer part of what we now call 'China,' no one can say at present. The few prehistoric Chinese skulls that have so far been measured appear to have belonged to people very like the Chinese of to-day; and the evidence, such as it is, of Chinese legend and folk-lore points to the occasional arrival of tribes or individuals of alien origin, who, on entering the Middle Kingdom, have found the Chinese 'already there.'

The indigenous tradition that Chinese culture arose in Central or North-Central China, and thence spread southward and eastward, is supported by historical and other data, and there is little evidence to the contrary.

An even greater puzzle, and more fruitful source of controversy, is the peculiar method of *reckoning time* with the Chinese; a system not referred to in the classics, but apparently in well-established use six centuries B.C.

Years, hours (of 120 minutes each, double the length

of the European hour), and the points of the compass are all classified under the headings of the 'ten stems' and the 'twelve branches.'

Stems 1 and 2	correspond to the element				Wood ;
Stems 3 and 4	”	”	”	”	Fire ;
Stems 5 and 6	”	”	”	”	Earth ;
Stems 7 and 8	”	”	”	”	Metal ;
Stems 9 and 10	”	”	”	”	Water.

(The Chinese names of the 'stems' have been omitted as immaterial to our purpose.)

The symbols of the twelve 'branches' are the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Cock, Dog and Pig. The two-hour period 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. corresponds to the 'Hour of the Rat'; 1 to 3 a.m., the 'Hour of the Ox'; and so on, round the clock.

The 'stems,' combined with the 'branches,' form a 'cycle' of 60, by which dates in history are identified, a check on these being afforded by the 'nien hao,' or 'year designation' of the Emperor (when there was one).

The twelve 'points' of the Chinese compass—which is more assiduously consulted by the geomancer, if possible, than by the mariner—are denoted by the twelve 'branches.' There are also a number of other scales and series set out in the circumference of the Chinese compass simply and solely for the purpose of divination, either in connection with Fêng Shui or otherwise.

Much speculation has arisen about the cycle of sixty years, which has been used, at one time or another, all over Eastern Asia, and concerning certain astrological notions common to the Arabs, Persians, Indians and Chinese. In view of the antiquity of Chinese written and traditional records, and the frequent communication between China and the West in pre-Mohammedan days, there is no reason to suppose that the curious

measurements of time which have been in vogue so long in China may not have been transmitted by borrowing to the surrounding peoples. Among the Chinese themselves the imagined connection of the twelve animals of the 'branches' with the points of the compass, the constellations, and the hours of the day has naturally given rise to numberless fantastic ideas on the subject of wind, weather, seasons, lucky and unlucky dates, and so forth. This branch of divination alone has quite a literature to itself.

For example, Liu An, or Huai Nan Tzū (died 122 B.C.), held the following views upon the Eight Winds of Heaven :

'The Directing Wind comes 45 days after the Winter Solstice ; 45 days later the Wind of the Illuminating of All Creatures blows ; 45 days later comes the Wind of Pure Brightness ; at midsummer comes the Wind of Brilliant Sunshine ; 45 days later the Cool Breeze blows ; 45 days later, the Wind of Closing the Gates of the Sunshine ; 45 days later, the Wind of Imperfection ; 45 days later, at mid-winter, the Wind of Widespread Inaction, of General Powerlessness.'

An old commentator develops this theme.

The Wind of Imperfection, he says, is from the north-west and 'presides at the killing of life.' The Wind of Widespread Inaction blows from the north at the season when Yang has sunk away and Yin has not asserted itself adequately to take its place. The Directing Wind from the north-east has the upper hand in the first stirrings of life. The Wind of the Illuminating of All Creatures blows from the east ; the Wind of Pure Brightness from the south-east, and 'dominates all living nature over which the winds blow.' The Wind of Brilliant Sunshine blows from the south, the zenith of Yang in its fullest activity. The Cool Breeze is from the south-west ; the Wind of Closing the Gates of Sunshine from the west. The

last-named wind refers to the shutting down in the earth of the animating operations of Yang for the winter season.

Although practitioners of Fêng Shui quote the *I Ching* as the *fons et origo* of their tenets, and use its almost unintelligible dicta on all possible occasions, literary evidence points to the Taoist revival in the credulous age of T'ang as the chief source of present-day geomancy in China. The view of Nature enunciated by Taoism, as we know, connects every form of life with every other form; nothing is too trivial or apparently irrelevant to affect the good or evil course of any event.

Even during the Han Period, learned Confucian writers believed that prosperity, erudition, and high official rank were secured by giving to one's ancestors grave-sites upon which they could look with satisfaction and gratitude. Liu Hsiang (77-6 B.C.), seeing that the Wang Clan were getting as rich and powerful as the Imperial Family, and were arrogantly asserting their influence, recounted that a post of dead wood in the Wang's ancestral graveyard was putting forth branches and leaves, and sending roots into the earth. This, in his eyes, showed that the ancestors of the house of Wang were 'getting busy,' and a *coup d'état* might be looked for. We are not told, however, whether the Emperor took the precaution of plundering or killing the Wangs.

The Taoist Kuoh P'oh (A.D. 276-324), whom legend endows with a 'blue bag,' the gift of an Immortal, containing a guide book for diviners, showed considerable nimbleness of wit in his interpretation of Fêng Shui.

When his mother died he resigned from the mandarin, and with the aid of omens deduced from the cracks in a scorched tortoise-shell, he fixed upon a

grave site for her in Ch'i Yang. As it was only a hundred paces from water, the general opinion was that it was too near ; but P'oh predicted that the water would soon become dry ground. A large area near the grave was eventually silted up, and the much-discussed water was replaced by fields and orchards.

P'oh having found a grave-site for another person, the Emperor disguised himself and went to see the chosen spot. 'Why have you buried the body in the horn of the dragon?' said the Emperor to a relative of the deceased. 'This is an omen of the extinction of your clan.' (The 'horn of the dragon' evidently refers to some hill or other natural feature, associated in geomancy with the dragon.)

'Kuoh P'oh told us,' replied the man, 'that whereas at this grave the ears of the dragon are not visible, it must cause a Son of Heaven (*i.e.*, an Emperor) to come here within three years.'

'Will the auspicious influence of the grave produce an Emperor?' asked the disguised Sovereign.

'It has the power of causing an Emperor to ask questions,' replied the relative of the deceased. The Emperor was much astonished.

The 'dragon' being a synonym for 'the Emperor' and the 'ears of the dragon' being invisible from the grave, the Emperor could hear nothing of or from the grave unless he came in person and asked questions.

As every Chinese who can read at all has some little knowledge of the Classics (which have a certain 'magic' value), and as the national literature on divination, Fêng Shui, etc., is very voluminous, we will expect, and find, that all natural features of hill and dale, plain and river, wind and rain are taken seriously. To 'blame the wind and scold the rain' is a heinous sin against the wisdom of Providence ; a bend in a brook or a scar on a hillside are read by the wisecracks



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and wondered at by the people as portents of good or bad fortune which may affect the actions of a clan numbering hundreds of people. Even in China, however, the 'physician' is sometimes asked why he does not 'cure himself.'

A popular rhyme says :—

'The geomancers talk a pack of nonsense,  
Pointing to North, South, East and West ;  
If in the hills there are places (lucky enough to endow  
them with) princely rank,  
Why do they not straightway bury their own ancestors  
there?'

A Fêng Shui adept has to be a glib, shrewd fellow, and, further, he must be ready to confess, with perfect truth, that T'ien Li, the Law of Heaven, or Divine Providence, may at any time, for inscrutable reasons, over-rule and supersede any effects that might be expected to accrue from the good or bad environment of a grave. The Chinese is not a savage or a fool ; he knows that a man's own sin or folly can neutralize the best gifts of fortune, and even the Fêng Shui textbooks themselves remind their readers that there is one fixed principle, viz. :—

'Do not fail to cultivate secret virtues ; the accumulation of *virtuous deeds* being the foundation of the search for (auspicious) sites.'

If bad luck supervenes, in spite of the fair words of a geomancer, the disappointed client can but examine his own conduct, and—as a good Confucian or Christian—acknowledge that the fault lies within himself.

Europeans are often repelled at the apparently callous way in which coffins are left unburied, in houses, under sheds, or even in exposed places, because an auspicious grave-site has not been found, or because a lucky day for the burial has yet to come.

The Chinese Government have in the past denied official promotion to people who unduly postponed

the burial of their parents. Various writers of the Confucian school have satirized the excessive subservience of the people to the threats and promises of Fêng Shui. The chief cause of such criticism is the risk of remains, left unburied too long, being abandoned and lost sight of through the death or impoverishment of the deceased's relatives ; the dishonour to the dead, and its evil effects on the living, thereby outweighing the possible consequences of inauspicious Fêng Shui.

Thus both practices—the delay in burial and the laws framed to check it—are due to the same awe of the dead, the same anxiety that they be not provoked to visit their dissatisfaction upon the living.

The delay and apparent negligence of the Chinese in repairing houses, temples, roads and bridges can all be traced to the feeling of uncertainty as to whether the digging into the earth, the felling of a tree, or the erection of a wall may not divert good or attract evil luck. The devices used as safeguards are sometimes rather undignified.

For example, early in the Ming Period, a professor of Fêng Shui predicted that the City of Chü Yung, near Nanking, would produce an Emperor, and that all its inhabitants would become mandarins. The Emperor, hearing of this, was alarmed, and had steps taken to diminish the city's unduly favourable Fêng Shui. He had the north gate of the city bricked up, and issued a decree forbidding the inhabitants to take up literary pursuits. The people were left the choice of three callings—barbers, corn-cutters and bamboo-root carvers. Since those days, it has been noticed that, throughout Central China, most members of these three trades are descended from Chü Yung men.

Further, since every mandarin has the right to erect an official pole in front of his house, the Chü Yung men, as mandarins by right of the prophecy—albeit barbers and craftsmen—asked for this privilege and

obtained it in a modified form. The travelling barber, to this day, erects an official pole on the box containing his paraphernalia.

Thus, by closing the north gate of Chü Yung and dispersing its people, that city was deprived of a great honour, but a dynastic upheaval was averted.

Legends as to the origin of the barber's pole seem to differ in China and in other countries. Possibly the same idea—to attract good spirits, or to frighten off bad ones—underlay everywhere the practice of erecting a specially marked post or pillar; particularly as hairs or nail-parings (abundant in a barber's shop) are sought after by practitioners of black magic, whose incantations are more dreaded if they are pronounced over the clippings or cuttings of their victims.

Time, bad weather, or accident may cause a grave to be injured; and if the inscription tablet or the actual mound over the body should be cracked or disfigured, the Fêng Shui of that grave becomes impaired, and may even 'die.'

The geomancer will then have to be called in, and, if the damage to the grave should coincide with a mishap of any importance in the family of the deceased, it may be necessary to seek a fresh grave and rebury the remains.

Occasionally the wily wizard informs the family that the bones within are in disorder, or that something else is amiss with the corpse; but so long as the survivors are well, and their affairs prosper, he may fail to get anything done. As soon, however, as illness or adversity shows itself, the family will most likely attribute it to the injury or 'death' of the Fêng Shui, and the geomancer will earn a fresh fee for finding a more auspicious site for the grave.

Quite apart from the cruel imposture thus practised upon simple people, whose filial piety is equalled by—and not entirely unconnected with—their dread of

poverty, illness, and loss of protection from evil spirits, Fêng Shui is a serious obstacle to the making and repairing of roads, bridges and houses ; to drainage works and railway cuttings ; to improvements in town-planning and in public sanitation. Curiously enough, the Chinese attribute the superior health and prosperity of residents in the foreign concessions to the deeper knowledge of Fêng Shui possessed by Europeans—not to Western hygiene or financial acuteness ! They think that the Europeans—while outwardly sneering at geomancy—possess its choicest secrets, and guard them jealously.

A fourteenth century book mentions the custom of acquiring ground for a grave by deed. The contract was inscribed in red on a wooden tablet, and the price of the ground appeared in numbers composed entirely of nines, *e.g.*, 999 coins, 99,999 strings of cash, and so forth. This reminds one of the leases of 99 or 999 years which are customary in England ; but there is no explanation of which I am aware, either here or in China, of any connection between the number 9 and the tenure of the land.

The purchase of an auspicious plot for a family grave is necessarily the privilege of the fairly well-to-do. How do the swarming poor of China arrange matters ?

The problem is solved by the village-elders purchasing and maintaining a common graveyard, if possible on a rocky or barren site, subject to Fêng Shui being not too adverse ; and here the villagers, who generally belong to one clan, will bury their dead for centuries in succession. As time goes on the graveyard will become overcrowded ; and clansmen of a scrupulous turn, as soon as they can afford to do so, will wish to disinter their relatives' remains and lodge them better elsewhere. As these communal cemeteries, however, often contain no grave tablets or other means of

telling one mound from another, a magical test has been devised for discriminating between one's own ancestors' remains and other people's. In the year 1247, a certain Sung Tzŭ described the procedure :

'If . . . a son or daughter desires to identify them (the bones of a parent), let the child prick some blood from its body and drop it on the bones. If they are those of the man or woman who gave birth to it, the blood is absorbed ; otherwise it is not imbibed.'

In the fifth century A.D. this belief was already ancient.

Sun Fa Tsung, a native of Wu Hsing, had lost his father in a quicksand on the seashore. His remains were not found. Sun's elder brothers and mother died of hunger, but Sun managed to keep body and soul together as he wandered about, and at sixteen years of age he was able to return to the place of his birth. Here, by dint of arduous work and severe self-denial, he scraped together enough money to buy cheap coffins for his mother and brothers. He then set out along the seashore to seek his father's bones. Whenever he found any dried-up (withered) bones, he cut himself and dropped blood on them ; but after ten years' quest, when his limbs were a mass of wounds and his body was mere skin and bone, he gave up the hope of reburying his father's remains. The rest of his life he spent in mourning garb and headband, by the grave of his mother and brothers.

The sceptic Wang Ch'ung, of whom more hereafter, had views of his own upon the subject of Fêng Shui. The world, said he, considers a dwelling propitious or otherwise, and that care should be taken to 'move in' in a lucky year, and in the correct month. But if an unlucky man or a foredoomed family move into a dwelling, they simply select an ill-omened one because their fate is steering them to disaster. The date and place of residence are immaterial.

## FÊNG SHUI

Before beginning to build a house, says our sceptic, it is usual to select an auspicious day. Houses cover human beings' bodies and shelter them; is this why the spirits dislike buildings? Do we therefore choose a lucky day to begin making a hat, a carriage, or a canopy? If the digging of foundations disturbs the spirits, must we consult omens before digging a trench or cultivating a garden? If the earth is injured, it is just as wrong to wound it on a propitious day as at any other time. A murder committed at any time is a murder.

Apparently, in the days of Wang Ch'ung, it was usual to number houses in cycles of sixty; and the *tones* of the surnames of their occupiers had to correspond to the tones of the house 'numbers.'

(In Chinese, as many people are aware, the correct intonation of a word is essential to clearness of speech.)

These cyclical names (see the earlier part of this chapter) were thought of as if they were spirits; and to please them it was even considered necessary for houses to face different ways according to the *tone* of the owner's name.

In the ancient state of Yen, North China, there was a valley so cold that none of the food-cereals could be grown in it. Tsou Yen, by playing his flute attracted fine, genial weather, with the result that millet grew in the valley in abundance, and since his time (fourth century B.C.) it has been known as the Vale of Millet.

The geographical aspect of Fêng Shui is so disguised by its magical significance that it has proved, as we see, a veritable obstacle to any real study of climate and physiography.

In the next chapter we shall notice how ignorance of geography and an unreasoning dislike and terror of aliens have given rise to a number of fantastic reports concerning 'foreign devils.'

## XII

### ‘FOREIGN DEVILS’

THE fear and dislike of people whose culture differs from that of the observer are so widely spread that the student of folk-lore soon becomes used to this attitude of mind, and takes it for granted. The results, as we have already noted, show themselves in a plentiful crop of wild tales wherever and whenever two or more unlike races are in contact.

To take a European example. In the South-Eastern countries we find the Latin, the Greek, the Magyar, the Slav, and the Turk ; peoples differing in language, habits and religion, and full of mutual distrust. In consequence, the ‘Balkan’ countries and what was once ‘Austro-Hungary’ are perfect museums of mixed traditions, veritable forcing-houses of imaginative tales. Belief in witches and were-wolves, vampires and demons is better preserved and more firmly held there than in any other ‘Western’ country.

In the northern parts of Sweden and Norway the Finns are still the pegs upon which are hung the somewhat worn trappings of magic. The Finns, in turn, give abundant evidence in their national saga, the *Kalevala*, that the Lapps were credited, quite late into historic times, with powers strongly reminiscent of those of the Yao Kuai of Chinese folk-lore. A few notes on this subject will appear in a later chapter.

Ireland was invaded under conditions pointing to the great ‘Keltic’ movements across Europe—one

形天神圖



“Headless Monster”





during the fifteenth century B.C. and the other considerably earlier. The invasions were resisted by a short, dark people, intelligent, excitable, artistic and capricious ; and there is little doubt that these Tuatha De Danann, as they were called by the 'Kelts,' were a branch of that widely-scattered and talented 'Iberian' race whose mental gifts were the foundation of the great cultures of the Mediterranean basin. The 'Kelts' settled down and mixed freely with the Iberians, and seem to have taken over and modified their pantheon, reshaping it to their own image and likeness ; while the Iberians themselves appear in the folk-traditions of their half-Keltic descendants as 'the good people,' *i.e.*, the fairies.

In the case of China, besides the uncertain number of races who met, clashed, amalgamated, and are now all called 'Chinese,' we have a ring of peoples on the far outer rim of Chinese culture who never have and never will become Chinese. These are 'foreign devils.'

Old Chinese travel and tale books are full of yarns told by sailors who had been weather-bound or shipwrecked among the dusky cannibals and head-hunters of the South Seas. Besides these, we have accounts of Turkish, Ugrian, and other Central Asian foreigners, some of whom openly boasted their descent 'from a wolf,' and were credited with diabolical natures and magic powers. The same Ugrians or Huns were thought by the Goths to be 'the offspring of witches and devils' ; which Goths, in turn, when they overran the less barbarous portions of Western Europe, were likened to wolves and bears in human form, and were supposed to change into beasts at will, by the power of the devil. The 'berserk,' or bear-skin clad Norse warrior, mad with blood-lust, is an obvious and well-known example.

The human—or, at any rate, non-spiritual—nature of many Chinese ‘ devils ’ is fairly clear from the outset.

The *Hu Wei* relates that Hill-hsiao are to be found in all parts of Kuang Tung (extreme south of China). They have one additional leg with a reversed heel; that is, three in all. Their females paint themselves with rice flour and red paint. They make nests in big, hollow trees, and are able to scare tigers away. (The ‘ reversed heel ’ of demons is to be found in Indian and Chinese folk-lore in other connections.)

The *Shan Hai Ching* says that certain hill-tribes, like dogs, but with human faces, are great runners and expert throwers. When they see a human being they laugh.

The *Shu-I-Chi* (sixth century A.D.) describes another class of hill-devils (or savages) with some detail. They are man-shaped, tall, black in colour, with red eyes and yellow hair.

Their nests, egg-shaped, are built in trees in the fastnesses of the mountains. They make themselves mattresses of birds’ feathers. They can change their form and render themselves invisible at will.

Têng Têh Ming describes a species of hill-creature which can be recognised by sharp, hooked nails on its fingers and toes. These beings live far away in the mountains, and are able to split trees into planks and store the timber. They put their dead in coffins; sometimes the confined dead are placed in high trees and sometimes in caves.

The *Pob Wu Chi* describes cave-dwellers without calves to their legs. They eat earth, and are sexless. After their death and burial their hearts do not decay; and a hundred years after death they are reborn as men. In the realm of dwarfs the livers do not decay, and the dwarfs are also reborn as men after a hundred years.

In the *Standard History* of the Sung Dynasty we read of beings who appeared in the Lo Yang district in



猩猩

鵲山有獸狀如

禺類獼猴髮垂

一地江東山中亦

有名猩猩能言



"Long-Haired Savages"

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the period 1119-1126. They resembled men, but squatted like dogs. They were quite black, and even their eyebrows and eyes were not clearly visible. In the beginning they seized babies in the night and devoured them; later on they broke into houses in broad daylight, and did much mischief. The strong men of Lo Yang armed themselves to drive them off; but it was two years before the panic caused by these 'devils' came to an end.

On other occasions, we are told, demons were bold enough to appear in gangs and hordes. In Tsing Yang, province of Shan Si, rumours of the approach of a spectral army were rife in the year A.D. 564, and the people gathered together and beat on copper and iron utensils to drive them away. Again, in 781, stories of cannibal demons or hairy men, coming from Hu Nan, spread through the Yang Tzŭ valley; fires were kept alight at night, and clamour of copper pans was raised to drive them off.

Invasions of savages are plainly indicated; hairy, dark-coloured beings with sharp teeth and glowing eyes, their natural ferocity of expression heightened by the frizzled locks and war-paint dear to the Melanesian islander.

The fact that the Emperors sometimes addressed official memorials to them, and even offered sacrifices—probably tribute—would appear to show that a vague tradition of landing-parties of savage islanders lingered for centuries in the popular memory. The data clearly point to the contact of alien races as a source of folk-lore.

The Western mountains of China, says the *Shên I Ching*, are haunted by unclad giants, more than a Chang<sup>1</sup> in height. They eat frogs and crabs. People passing through those hills light fires and explode

<sup>1</sup> A Chang is 10 Chinese feet (11 ft. 9 in.).

joints of bamboo in the fires to scare them off. (This is supposed to be the origin of the use of fire-crackers for driving away devils.) If these giants are attacked, they infect their assailants with fever.

This association of fever with spectres is important, and is referred to at greater length in the chapter on 'Vampires.'

Another kind of hill-demon, also very tall, wears a fur coat and a bamboo hat—doubtless a Siberian savage, and not a Melanesian islander.

Sometimes we read of these demons being 'rounded up' with rings of bonfires, and burnt to death or killed with spears; another statement supporting the theory that they were human beings of low culture, quite different from the wraiths of the departed, or from evil spirits in the Western sense, which have no mortal body.

The *Poh Wu Chi* (third century A.D.) tells us that there lived in Hu Peh a fierce race who were able to transform themselves into tigers. It was said that these tiger-men wore red costumes of *dolichos* fibre, and had human feet, but without heels.

Some of the hill-men of Java and Sumatra and the Mundas in Chota Nagpur (India) are feared as sorcerers who can turn themselves into tigers at will; and it is popularly believed that they can devour their enemies and witch away the lives of men and beasts.

Herodotus tells us that the aborigines of Lithuania and Volhynia were wizards, and that once a year they used to become wolves for a certain number of days.

Mermen and mermaids are described in the *Shub I Chi* as living in the Southern Seas. They weave at the loom incessantly; and when they weep, their tears become pearls. Their skin is as white as jade; they have long manes and soft fur of five colours. They

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are entirely human in form (not fish-tailed, like European mer-folk); their features and hands are those of beautiful women; and they are harmless. Their height is between five and six feet.

Is it assuming too much to see in this tale the long hair, coloured feather kilts, and tattoo-marks of the Polynesian islanders? The inhabitants of certain Pacific islands have almost European features, and are understood to have migrated thither from the Asiatic mainland comparatively late in history. Chinese tradition is probably old enough to record the peculiarities of these people before they were darkened by climate and intermarriage with swarthy types. Many of their women are still of a pale brown colour.

*They had no  
swarthy types.*

Lieh Tzū mentions a race of pygmies, and gives them a height of about a foot and a half; Confucius also refers to them, but says they are about three feet high. In A.D. 110 some three thousand of them submitted to the Emperor, and sent as tribute ivory and small humped cattle. They were said to live in caverns, and to be dreaded by birds and beasts. A tribe of giants, from beyond the regions of the 'barbarians' residing on the four boundaries of China, were credited with being cannibals and devouring pygmies.

Folklorists have remarked that giants are mostly referred to in the past tense. The usual explanation of this is that tall peoples are less hardy and prolific, and less easily nourished than shorter races. In historic times they appear to have degenerated very rapidly in warm climates, and to have been driven out or absorbed by more adaptable types of mankind. (See also the chapter on other folk-lore and their relation to that of China.)

Hungary possesses, as one might expect, quite a number of parallels to the Chinese folk-tales about horrid and monstrous foreigners.



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In the *Hungarian Fairy Book* of Mr Nándor Pogány we have references to :—

The dog-headed King of Black Land ; goat-headed, ape-headed and horse-headed princes, all suitors for human brides ; a dwarf King, living in the hills ; a witch with horns, and another with an elephant's head and ears like bats' wings ; a Roumanian who had the power to turn himself into a black bull ; and an enchanted prince in the form of a grasshopper.

We also find a green water-king, rather like the Chinese Dragon King of the Seas ; a water-fairy who married a mortal ; and a semi-mythical hero, Zeta, whose mother was a fairy.

Although the age of these tales is unknown, and is probably not very great, the evidence of contact with other races is strikingly apparent. The ugly, low-caste people of certain parts of India and the elephant-headed god or demon Ganpat are quite recognisable ; the fairy princesses married to human heroes, on the other hand, are a Western touch, no doubt owing to the beauty and wisdom of European women, with whom the Hungarians began to mate soon after their arrival from Central Asia.

The Serb heroes, Vuk Brankovitch and Marko Kraljevitch, were often befriended by *Vila* or hill-fairies in the form of beautiful maidens ; and the folklore of Modern Greece contains references to forest fairies who are almost identical with the nymphs of the classical age. Possibly the fairies of the Taoist earthly paradise of Hsi Wang Mu were only pretty Persian or European girls, after all.

Returning to China and its Asiatic neighbours, we find that Ma Tuan Lin (died A.D. 1325) describes a country in the far north, sixty days' journey from the kingdom of Chiao Ma. Its inhabitants roam about at night, but hide themselves during the day. They dress in dirty deer-skins. Their eyes, noses, and ears

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are like those of the Chinese, but their mouths are at the top of their heads. They eat from earthenware dishes. They have no rice in their country, and live on deer-skin and 'earth horses.' Thirty days' travel southwards from their country takes one to that of the T'uh Chüeh.

Evidently this is a sketch of people living in the Arctic region of long night, north of the T'uh Chüeh (Turkish?) part of Siberia. They are muffled up over their mouths in greasy skin clothing, but the features visible are Mongolian in appearance. They are entirely flesh-eaters, feeding upon some kind of walrus, and they chew seal-skins to make them pliable for covering boats, etc. Their pit dwellings and snow burrows are such as Eskimo, Ostiak and other Northern peoples still use.

Although their country is called a 'spectre-land,' its inhabitants are clearly human, and are more accurately depicted than most of the 'foreign devils' of Chinese and other folk-lore.

It is rather curious that the Eskimos have a folk-tale describing a black creature with four hands which can climb on walls and roofs without falling off; showing that they were at one time in contact with people from a warm country, where monkeys could live, and no doubt occupied a somewhat less forbidding region themselves. (Knut Rasmussen.)

In the first month of the year 1755 it was noticed that a large number of infants died of convulsions in Peking. During their attacks a bird like an owl was seen—so the story goes—to hover round the lamps in the sick-rooms. At the death of the child this bird vanished.

A clever archer, hearing of a fresh case, went into the bedroom where the infant lay, and as soon as the evil bird appeared he shot at it. The bird was hit,

cried out with pain, and flew away. It was traced by its blood to a little room near the kitchen of a military official called Li. There lay an old woman with green eyes, wounded in the loins by an arrow. She was of the country of the Miao Tzu, a *non-Chinese* mountain people of the South, and had been captured by Li in one of his campaigns in Yün-Nan. She had long been suspected of witchcraft, and confessed that she could turn herself into a bird of prey. In that form she sallied forth about midnight to feed upon the brains of infants. She had thus caused the death of more than a hundred.

She was burned alive, and the epidemic of convulsions ceased.

Here we have a 'foreign devil' who is also a were-owl, and works black magic; destruction of her body by fire puts an end to her evil activities, as in the case of a vampire.

The popular conception of witches is curiously alike in many countries. European witches were supposed to use preparations of different parts of an infant's body in compounding their magic ointments; and missionaries, who have founded children's hospitals and orphanages in China, have sometimes been accused by anti-foreign mobs of similar disgusting practices.

About the middle of the sixteenth century spectre panics arose in different provinces.

Certain phantoms, we are told, came from the North, shaped like apes, bats, monkeys, or dogs, or as *thick vapours* with tails and claws. Those who came in contact with them died. They appeared in compact masses, and when struck at they dispersed, changing into sparks or small globular lights which disappeared on colliding with the eaves of houses.

(The analogy to East European vampires is very

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close, and the story can be interpreted either as an anti-foreign one or an illustration of the mingled fallacies involved in the vampire theory, and treated in an earlier chapter.)

The representation of ground-demons or earth-gnomes as goats is very difficult to understand.

The idea is handed down from remote antiquity by one Han Ying, of the second century B.C., and Confucius is said to have endorsed the superstition. In Han and T'ang times, ghouls which feed on corpses were believed to take the form of goats; and we know that the Greek Pan and the demons of mediaeval European witchcraft were alike represented as were-goats or goat-devils. But the origin of the tradition, so far as I am aware, has not been satisfactorily traced.

The antipathy of the Chinese to digging into the ground below the level necessary for agriculture, or to altering or pulling down buildings, is due to the dread of earth-spirits. Sanitation, as we understand it, does not exist in China; and the evil smells and countless disease-germs which are let loose into the surrounding air when an ordinary Chinese dwelling is demolished may well have originated the earth-demon theory. (The chapter on 'Fêng Shui' deals with several examples of superstitions connected with digging in the earth.)

On the other hand, the Greek and 'Gothic' goat-devils, associated with witches' meetings and with uncanny rites celebrated in the woods, point to the contact of unlike races in Europe; and in China there may quite well have been similar contact and association at an early date with foreigners who sacrificed goats to their gods, or had a goat 'totem.'

It may be remarked that the horned Oni (demons) of Japan do not help us; there is nothing of the goat about them in the majority of cases.

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

In the year 99 B.C. the Emperor Wu held a meeting of sages and wizards, and a certain Tung Fang So described a journey to the North Pole.

He came to a mountain which was never illumined either by the sun or the moon, but was completely lit up by a torch held in the jaws of a blue dragon.

There were on the mountain gardens, fields, ponds and so on, studded with luminous plants. Twigs taken from these plants, as one might expect, were efficacious in driving away spectres.

The reference here is, perhaps, to the *Aurora Borealis*.

A work of the fourth or fifth century A.D. says that in the East and the South is a creature which travels right across the world. His length and girth are equal, and on his head he bears the 'father of fowls,' and a 'demon-quelling mask.' His dress is red, with a girdle of white silk, and a red snake, head to tail, is curled about his brow. He neither eats nor drinks anything but dew, which is his broth, and spectres, which are his food. One of his names is The Red Huang Fu.

This can only be the sun, red in colour, crowned with a cock, and a vanquisher of the goblins of darkness. Owing to a quite uncritical respect for the written word, however, the description does not appear to have been accepted as a riddle, but as a wonder tale of 'foreign parts.'

The celebrated 'Spring and Autumn Annals' of Confucius mention certain individuals who were 'banished into the four frontier States to repulse the goblins and devils,' *i.e.*, the foreigners and their unfriendly gods.

The *Shan Hai Ching* reports that in the North is the 'Kingdom of the Ghosts.'

The sceptic Wang Ch'ung, commenting on these stories, remarks that malignant devils have bodies,

and therefore they can be caught and thrown as food to tigers. Though sometimes invisible, and different in nature from men, they cannot be unsubstantial or unreal, being eatable.

Huai Nan Tzū (died 122 B.C.) relates that Lu Ao, during the third century B.C., wandered northwards into Mongolia. There he met an individual with deep-set eyes, a dark-coloured nose, and a long neck like a wild goose. The stranger, by lifting his shoulders, was able to rise and descend in the air against the wind. Suddenly catching sight of Lu Ao, he took refuge under a rock. Lu Ao saw him there, resting on the back of a tortoise and eating an oyster.

Lu Ao accosted the stranger, and addressed him thus :—

‘Sir, because I have given up what most people desire, separating myself from home and kindred to explore remote regions, I think you will condemn me. Since my youth I have been a wanderer. When I grew up, I did not care for the ordinary duties of man, but continued to travel. Of the four quarters of the world, the Great North is the only one I have not yet seen. Now I meet you here unexpectedly, sir. Shall we be friends?’

The stranger laughed at him and replied, ‘Why, you are Chinese. You ought not to have come so far as this. However, you will still find the sun and moon shining, and all the stars; the four seasons alternate in their due order; the Yang and the Yin still function. Compared to the “Nameless Region” this is only like a small hill. Now I have to travel south over the “Weary Waste,” to halt in the north at the “Hidden Village,” to proceed west to the “Obscure Hamlet,” and to pass to the east through the “Place of Dimness.” There will be no earth beneath me and no heaven above me. Listening, one does not hear,

and to the looker-on, objects flit away from sight. Beyond that region there is still form; where that ends, one travels ten million *li* at one step. I cannot yet journey so far. You, sir, have come here in your travels, and speak of exploring. Is not that an exaggeration? But stay if you please. I have to meet the genius Han Man in the ninth heaven, and must delay no longer.' The stranger then lifted his arms and floated off into the clouds.

Lu Ao stared after this prodigy (evidently a Taoist adept), and sighed when he thought of his own feeble achievements as an explorer.

The reference to Mongolia by its name is one of the earliest known in Chinese history. The stranger who had so much of the bird about him (almost a were-goose) may have been a Mongolian Shaman who believed that his spirit travelled while he was in a state of religious hysteria, or while acting as a 'medium' for spirit messages; on the other hand, the tale may be a mere Taoist parable of a man who sought to become an immortal by wandering away from the abiding-places of his kind, and was not found ready for admittance into the company of the Hsien.

The tale is, unfortunately, a short one. Doubtless, like the Walrus and the Carpenter, Lu Ao and the Mongolian aviator 'talked of many things'; and in the vague boasting of the latter, it is interesting to notice a conception of what we should call 'inter-planetary space' beyond the realm of matter and form.

In closing this chapter on 'foreigners,' it may be worth while saying a few words upon the relation between the languages and cultures of China and Japan. This is sometimes misunderstood by Europeans.

One of the races which enter into the 'make-up' of the Japanese people is believed, on the evidence avail-

able, to have migrated from south-eastern China, and certain types of Chinese and Japanese are much alike in build and complexion.

The Japanese were often called dwarfs by the Chinese; and their daring in war and seafaring and their military organisation earned the fear and hatred of their neighbours.

As regards general culture, it is fairly safe to say that Chinese influences, directly or by way of Korea, began to build up a civilisation in Japan about the time when Julius Cæsar landed in Britain; and that the ancient Britons were, in the main, further advanced in their way of living than their contemporaries in aboriginal Japan.

During the first five centuries A.D., Chinese and Korean priests of Buddhism, and craftsmen of various kinds, gradually—and on the whole quickly—introduced the arts and religions of China into Japan; and a century or two later a jumble of native legends, scraps of Chinese history, and some rather gross myths were collected and committed to writing in obedience to the decree of the Japanese Emperor. In this compilation—which was in Chinese—the beginnings of Japanese history and culture were arbitrarily run back to about the time of the foundation of Rome in the eighth century B.C.; and the resulting mixture of fiction and legend became the official history of the Sacred Emperors and their first ancestors, and was accepted as such by all classes of Japanese.

In every detail Japanese arts and crafts are founded on, and developed from, those of China, and the religions and philosophies of Japan—apart from the rather childish animism native to the country in its primitive state—are all imported. Careful study is often necessary to distinguish Japanese from Chinese art objects; at other times a somewhat lighter handling and a certain fastidiousness in colour and com-



position show the influence of Japanese taste, which adapted as well as adopted the aesthetic canons of Chinese art and suited them to the frivolous, beauty-loving temperament of the Japanese.

For a long time Chinese characters alone were employed in writing Japanese. Then a syllabary was invented, which represents the sounds of Japanese words, on the whole, well and accurately ; but it was not used for serious writing.

At present most of the important words in a Japanese sentence, and all compound words introduced to express Western inventions and other foreign ideas, are written in Chinese characters ; while grammatical particles, prepositions (or rather *post*-positions, as they come *after* the noun in Japanese) and other aids to the complex syntax of the language, appear in the native syllabary.

The number of words in the language that are of Chinese origin, and are pronounced in a manner reminiscent of an early dialect of Chinese, is, of course, very great. Latin has played a marked and profoundly important part in forming the English tongue ; but to realise what Chinese means to the Japanese language we must imagine what English would have become if Latin had been, down to to-day, the language of the Church, the Court, and polite society ; if the Bible, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Walter Scott, and Dickens had been written in Latin ; if the plays of Barrie, Pinero, and Galsworthy were performed in Latin ; if every child spent five years of its school life in learning Latin and nothing else ; and if words of Latin origin in current use were written in Roman capitals and the rest of the sentence in shorthand.

It will be interesting to note, during the coming years, how far Japanese commercial and other influences will react upon the written and spoken languages

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of China. A movement is already on foot, inaugurated by the celebrated Professor Hu Shih, of the National University of Peking, for the dissemination throughout China of books on various subjects written in the 'spoken' language, in lieu of the terse, obscure and academic 'literary style' so jealously adhered to by classical scholars. How far the unifying effect of this movement on the national consciousness will counteract Japanese influences no man can say; languages develop along their own mysterious lines, and can neither be led nor driven. In any case, one can only hope that as many books as possible, of the right kind, will be written and read in China, and will help to improve the feeling between the people of that afflicted land and all varieties of 'foreign devils.'

Though folk-lore owes much of its material to ignorance of foreigners and their religion, it bears valuable witness to the fact that similar ideas are current among peoples far apart in habitat, culture, and creed.

The comparison of some beliefs and practices common to a considerable section of mankind will be the subject of the next chapter.

### XIII

#### ‘ONE TOUCH OF NATURE’

##### POINTS OF CONTACT BETWEEN CHINESE AND OTHER FOLK-MYTHOLOGIES

REFERENCES to the folk-lore of different countries occur in other chapters of this book, and it is hardly necessary to reiterate the statement that imaginative or credulous people are to be met with everywhere.

Not only are the uneducated Chinese fanciful and superstitious, but their folk-tales are like those of other fanciful and superstitious people; and the similar effects of similar causes upon the minds of men—wherever and however they live—point, more emphatically perhaps than even physical evidence, to the unity of the human race.

The various migration theories—whence the habit of writing about each section of humanity as if it must have come from ‘somewhere else’ before settling in its present habitat—have their justification, up to a point, in the growing body of evidence that the first great strides in human culture were taken in an area between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. Of China we only know at present that its cultural focus was in the Central or North-Central part, and the recorded contacts with foreigners before the Christian era are not of a kind helpful to civilisation, but most emphatically the reverse. During those twenty-five centuries B.C. China seems to have received little from

Central or Western Asia that she would not have been better without.<sup>1</sup>

Leaving, however, these remote and barren speculations, we may now dip into the folk and fairy-lore of peoples who, at one time or another, wandered through the Old World from East to West, and told tales which link the ancient faiths of the Chinese, the Finns, the Magyars, the Teutons and the 'Kelts.'

The Finns belong to a group of races which are traceable across Northern Asia and North-Eastern Europe. Judging from skull forms, the European Finns, of Finland proper, are a mixed people; they are largely blended, also, in Northern and Central Russia, with Slavs and others, but in the main they are akin to the Lapp and the Esthonian, and more remotely to the Hungarian and the Turk.

The Vogul and Ostiak of Siberia and the Uigur of the Chinese border are generally accepted as members of this group, viz., the Altaic, or Finno-Ugrian. Of these the Finn and the Hungarian are the most important Western representatives. The great national epic of Finland, the *Kalevala*, is best known to us through Mr. W. F. Kirby's translation and notes. The form of the poem is one which Longfellow used in his famous *Hiawatha*, and similar ideas underlie both. The *Kalevala* was not collected and edited until 1835, and evidences of contact with Christianity and foreign cultures are numerous; but the animism of North-Eastern Asia is so strongly marked, and the references to magic are so detailed and frequent, that no one who cares for folk-lore can fail to find useful material in the *Kalevala*.

We find that all the Finnish heroes are skilled in magic, and are thus able to propitiate or even command the gods. At the back of all was the *primaeval*

<sup>1</sup> The dim period, anterior to the beginnings of her semi-mythical records, has hardly begun to be studied.

Ukko, the Old Man, the God of Heaven ; he reminds us of Saturn or Chronos and of T'ien, the Supreme Personal God of early China ; the modern Chinese expression 'Ung,' for a venerable bearded patriarch, may or may not be connected with this Ugrian Heaven-God.

The true name of a person or thing, in Finnish magic, must be known to anyone who aims at controlling or exorcising its evil powers ; the 'word of origin' and a magic song reciting the story of its creation, are declaimed by the wizard, and forthwith it is helpless. Thus, knowledge is power : bring to light the facts about anything and its glamour vanishes ; its mystery is explained away.

The Confucian acid-test of common-sense is another aspect of the same belief.

The Finnish culture-hero, Väinämöinen, is Son of the Wind and of the Virgin of the Air. For Wind or Breath, read Ch'i, the universal 'soul-breath' of Chinese philosophy ; and the air is described in the 'Tao Têh Ching' as the space between heaven and earth which 'is empty, yet contains all things.'

This Air-Virgin descended into the sea and modelled the earth, very much as Nü Kua repaired the heavens after the titanic upheaval directed by Kung Kung against the heavenly deities.

Aïno, a Lapland maiden, sister to the Lapp wizard who was challenged to a magic contest by the Finn hero, was reincarnated as a salmon after she had been drowned. The salmon is a magical fish in Keltic folk-lore also ; and the Chinese sturgeon of the Yellow River, should it succeed in passing the Lung Mên or Dragon's Gate Rapids, becomes transformed into a dragon. The early jade dragon ornaments of China (Han Period) were usually made in fish-like forms.

Aini, by the way, was the old Keltic goddess of fertility.

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The Finn hero cannot build a boat without visiting Tuonela, the death-kingdom, to learn the three magic words necessary.

Keltic legend represented magical and artistic knowledge as coming from the land of the dead, pointing to necromancy or attempts at learning the secrets of the after-life by dealing with spirits.

More poetically, perhaps, inherited or traditional knowledge might be regarded as wisdom derived from the departed.

The descent of a hero into the nether world is found in all mythologies, and, in Chinese folk-lore, we have seen that such occurrences are almost commonplace incidents, and are recounted with a wealth of *prosaic* detail.

Ilmarinen, the primaeval smith, forges himself a wife of gold and silver, but is not so successful as the Greek Pygmalion. In Welsh mythology, a woman is made, somewhat more appropriately, of flowers, and becomes Blodeuwedd, wife of the solar deity Lleu Llaw Gyffes. Images become animated in many Chinese folk-tales, and sometimes marry mortals.

Iron, in the Finland epic, is a mighty and very magical substance, and has a long poem to itself. Three daughters of the Creator-Deity were the mothers of its three varieties—probably soft or pure iron, a harder variety (a kind of natural steel), and red ore, which required smelting. Ilmarinen worked iron to the sound of magical songs, and reviled it for having wounded Väinämöinen. Lemminkäinen put on a magic girdle of 'steel' in preparation for his expedition to the wizard-land of the Lapps. The ancient Egyptians had a superstitious dread of iron, and European witches could be baffled and defeated by the use of it. The forging of sword-blades in Old Japan was accompanied by religious rites.

The later Bronze Age was no doubt a time of much

fighting between the users of that metal and the races—whoever they may have been—who first attacked them with iron weapons. Possibly the magic swords of Western legend, which could only be drawn from a rock by the destined wizard or culture-hero, were made of iron obtained from magnetic iron-ore; and the attraction of the magnet, and the difficulties of smelting iron in early times, both helped to give rise to these stories, as we have noticed elsewhere.

The exorcising value of swords in China has been shown in many of the tales quoted in the present volume.

The use of a silken bandage for the hero's wound is not, perhaps, an important reference in an undated collection like the *Kalevala*; but the giant Antero Vipunen, with trees growing on his body, is strongly reminiscent of the Chinese Titan P'an Ku, the 'undeveloped and unenlightened' inhabitant of primaevial chaos, who in dying gave birth to the existing material universe. 'His skin and the hair on it became the plants and trees.'

Giants as typifying the earth are common to many countries. They are often confused with the heroes and gods of savage races, subjugated or exterminated by later comers. Remains of very tall persons have been found in Sweden; and in the tales about 'foreigners,' traditional in most places, difference of stature is a marked feature. The inhabitants of the great civilising centres of the globe around the Mediterranean and in China are mostly of middle or rather low stature. Tall races require more food than small races, and are generally less prolific; they can never have been very numerous, and their achievements in most mythologies are related to have come to an end in the earliest times. Dwarfs, on the other hand, are not so often mentioned 'in the past tense.'

To return to the *Kalevala*. Lapland (Pohjola) is *par*

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*excellence* the land of magic, and Annikki, the Maid of Pohjola, divines from a log of wood in the fire whether the approach of strangers means war or peace. If *blood flowed* from the log when it was put in the fire, it would be a presage of war. (See Chinese tales of trees wounded by arrows, and shedding their blood.)

The rowan tree or mountain ash was sacred in Finland and in Scotland. Väinämöinen sowed 'rowan trees in holy places'—presumably where human sacrifices were offered to the sun; the evil one, Hiisi, or Juutas, made a magic elk and a magic reindeer from rotten wood,

'with a head of rotten timber,  
horns composed of willow-branches,  
... and his flesh of rotten timber.'

The uncanny features of rotten wood and the beliefs connected with the willow are seen in Chinese legends.

In the Welsh story of Gwydion's battle against the powers of the underworld, trees and grasses became men and aided the solar hero. He had to fight a hundred-headed beast, a hundred-clawed toad and a crested serpent.

Lludd inveigled a dragon into a vessel of mead, and there destroyed it. In Japanese myth, Susano-o-no-Mikoto, brother of Amaterasu-no-Kami, the Sun Goddess, slays an eight-headed dragon—having first made it drunk—and from its tail draws a magic sword.

In Babylonian and other legends, solar heroes slay the monsters of the deep.

The Chinese Titan, P'an Ku, is sometimes represented as a dragon-like monster.

The Finn hero on one occasion sees a dwarf, entirely dressed in copper, arise out of the sea, and, like the Kuei in so many Chinese tales, rapidly swell to the size of a mighty hero.

This narrative may be a parable indicating the intro-



duction of some new development in metal-craft by a foreign race.

Gaelic folk-lore describes the Fomorians as sea-devils, enemies of the gods worshipped by the (presumably Iberian) people of Ireland, the Tuatha De Danann. The Irish legends accuse the Fomorians of having no marriage customs—a familiar gibe in Chinese tales against ‘foreign devils’; and, more remarkable still, some of these Fomorians were stated to have only one arm or one leg, or to have the heads of goats, horses, or bulls, like the monsters and Buddhist demons in Chinese stories. An invasion of dwarf-wizards occurred, says Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the reign of the solar king-deity, Lludd.

When the Lapp maiden Aïno was drowned, the hare carried the evil tidings to her parents. This animal, as we have seen, figures largely in Chinese and Indian legends, and was formerly considered a creature of ill-omen in the British Islands.

Väinämöinen’s mother gave him advice from the grave after her death, like some of the mothers of oppressed orphans in Grimm’s fairy tales, and like certain friendly Kuei, the spirits of ancestors, in Chinese folk-lore.

Fergus, a fellow-warrior with the Irish Cuchulain, was recalled from the dead by a Chief Bard—whom the Chinese would, no doubt, have styled a Wu—in order to tell the true story of the celebrated cattle raid called in Gaelic ‘Táin Bó Chuailgné.’

In the Instruction to the Bride (*Kalevala*, Runo xxiii.), the girl is told to rise at cock-crow; and should the solar rooster fail her, to time herself by the moon or by the Great Bear. This sacred constellation was no doubt in great request when (see Runo xlvii.), after a great bear-feast, the sun and moon were stolen by a Lapland witch and hidden, like Japan’s sun goddess, in a ‘steel-hard mountain.’ Väinämöinen uses divin-

ing-sticks and offers a prayer to the God of Heaven, and eventually finds the mountain in which the sun and moon are hidden. He sets them free, after many adventures, with a magic sword and the help of the smith-god, Ilmarinen.

A sword is bloodthirsty by nature, and speaks, in another Runo, of its eagerness for killing. Certain swords, well known in the history of feudal Japan, had the reputation of seeking bloodshed; and Taoist magic swords, in Chinese tales, sometimes kill 'demons' by being left in a haunted room, with no human hand to wield them.

The Finn, like the Chinese Wu, banished pain from an injured man, and sent it to the Mountain of Suffering, 'there to fill the stones with anguish.'

When the giant Antero Vipunen swallows Väinämöinen, the latter sets to work in the stomach of the monster at forging and fashioning iron weapons. The giant is so tortured by this internal convulsion that he sings a long magic song to expel the 'demon of disease.' He mentions every source from which the evil could possibly have come, and tells the evil gods to depart in language similar to that used in such conjurations by Chinese Wu.

Antero was very probably a personification of the earth itself, wherein the mysterious processes of mining metals went on. One is reminded of Vulcan, working as a smith in the bowels of a volcano in the Mediterranean, and of Antaeus, son of Earth.

A water-kelpie or Phuka is invoked by Lemminkäinen in Runo xii. as 'Water-Mistress, with thy people,' to help him in his expedition against the Lapps. In Keltic or rather Gaelic legend, all sorts of monsters and magical creatures come up out of the sea; and some very fearsome spectres from the same source are heard of in China.

The daughter of Tuoni, the God of the Underworld

and of Death, became the mother of the disease-devils which she sent forth against the land of Kalevala. Väinämöinen prepared a hot bath for the God of Heaven, and sang magic songs to banish the diseases into the heart of the mountains. A fiery sword was flashed at the plague-demons to drive them off, and the sores of the sufferers were anointed with magic drugs.

Parallels with Chinese belief might be multiplied indefinitely, seeing that the Finno-Ugrian peoples unquestionably came from North-Eastern Asia, and had no appreciable contact for centuries with any culture but that of China.

The Gaelic and 'Welsh' myths, with which we have compared them, are cited as evidence of the similarity of the human mind in widely-distant quarters of the globe. The accepted hypothesis regarding the Irish and Welsh is, as indicated earlier in this chapter, that a Mediterranean race settled in these islands before any ascertainable date, and were mixed with 'Kelts,' who came in two waves with a fairly long interval between them. Of these invasions, the later, or 'Welsh-Kelt' irruption, may have been about 1500 B.C.; the 'Gaelic Kelts' some centuries earlier.

Their myths—allowing for an admixture of 'Iberian' beliefs—their weapons, ornaments and social organisation, all point to Central Asia as the focus from which they issued in various directions. In art-objects and conventions of ornament and in the shapes of swords and daggers, the Chinese, Siberian and Irish 'finds' have too much in common to be explained away by mere barter; and the evidence from Finnish poetry—however mixed and modernised—is supported by the 'Cimbrian' remains in Sweden.

Whatever the period may have been, these Cimbrians preceded the 'Teutonic' peoples in Scandinavia, and were probably—in a loose sense—'Keltic.'

Their name is so close to that of the 'Cymru' of Wales and 'Cumberland,' and their ships and rock-carvings were so widely-spread—even as far as Egypt—that one may fairly connect them with the 'Keltic' race-groups which are traceable all over the Western world in pre-Teutonic times. The wide distribution of ruins, etc., ornamented with the well-known 'swastika,' the connection of cattle with sun-worship (the cult of Bel or Baal), the burial of the dead in barrows, and other features belonging more to archæology than to the elements of folk-lore, all point to extensive land-migrations—before and shortly after the beginnings of historical tradition—across the old world from Kamtschatka to Galway.

Whether the nucleus of Chinese culture was due to an invasion of white or Finno-Ugrian people from the North-West will, perhaps, never be known. The mental vigour of the true Chinese seems to warrant the existing belief in a self-originated culture; but it may be noticed that all varieties of man, in the Old World, merge into one another, and that mixed races are the most progressive. The physical peculiarities of the 'Kelt' and of the 'Teutonic' sub-variety of man shade, by way of the round-skulled 'Alpine' type, into the Armenoid, Turkish and Mongolic; the skeletal peculiarities of the 'Iberian,' through the very long-skulled Berber, and native Egyptian, into the negro.

The Lapp and the Eskimo are probably remnants of earlier Mongolic peoples from warmer climates, driven north by Turkish or 'Keltic' enemies.

The 'one touch of nature' is noticeable in the identity of widely-spread folk-tales, modified by time and changes of religion, but similar in broad outline.

From the little we know of the original habitat of the Teutons, and the uncertain date of their appearance in Europe, we can turn to their very considerable

body of mythology. Here we shall find evidence of quite intimate contact with Asiatic thought, not untinged, of course, with earlier 'Keltic' and later Christian beliefs; the whole pointing as directly as such evidence can to a sojourn in Central Asia, and to contact with various non-'Teutonic' peoples on the way thence to the Centre and North of Europe.

To begin with, the earliest known beliefs of the Teutons were sufficiently mixed to show that they, like every other progressive race, had intermarried with other peoples before the dawn of written history.

Their gods were either deified men or embodiments of natural forces; and they were elevated, conquered, annexed or killed outright, just like human warriors. Two kinds of burial were known—(a) crouched burial in a chambered grave-mound, indicating (as in China) the belief in a soul residing in the grave, and needing food, pottery, and military equipment in the tomb, and (b) cremation, so as to prevent the haunting of the living by the much-dreaded phantom of the dead. Body-burning in China and elsewhere was the sovereign specific against spooks and vampires.

Odin was a culture god. A late-comer and probably a foreigner, he was patron of poetry and magical literature. He could change his shape, and his cloak was coloured like a sky flecked with clouds. The warriors held by Thor, a thunder-god of decidedly Vedic physiognomy, and Tyr, a shadowy personage worshipped in very early times; Odin was gradually elevated—or perhaps restored—by the Skalds (bards) to a position similar to T'ien, the God of Heaven, in China.

The creation-story of the 'Teutons,' it is clear, was first told in a harsh climate; and in this respect their craving for light and heat, their 'southward-facing' aspirations and terror of the North were very like the sentiments of the Chinese. We have had occasion

to notice elsewhere that the attitude of Chinese legend towards sunshine and rain is that of a people who dislike the cold, and whose racial consciousness did not take shape in a hot climate. The wide use of chairs in China, compared with the practice of other Asiatics, is frequently quoted in support of the same view.

Ymer, the Teutonic chaos-giant, is just like the Chinese P'an Ku. Ymer's flesh and bones became earth and rock ; his skull became the dome of heaven ; his blood, the sea. The struggle between Good and Evil is vividly expressive of the northern Winter fighting the Summer ; but, in Teutonic myth, Winter is the winner. An element of fatalistic gloom, traceable down to to-day in Scandinavian and East European literature, contrasts with the victory of brightness and beauty in ' Keltic ' and Greek myths, and with the indomitable stoicism which supports the heroes of Chinese fable in the face of the most fantastic horrors.

The vast cow, Andhumla, who succoured Ymer with her milk, reminds us of the Vedic gods of early India ; as also does the beneficent night-goddess, Nat—daughter of Wisdom and sister of Fate. In Eastern and Northern Asia night—and all that it connotes—is evil ; mists and malaria, devils and ghouls, disease-spirits and uneasy ghosts are denizens of the dark. But in the Rigveda, as in Egypt and Greece, night is a gentle and kindly influence.

Odin's world-tree, Ygdrasil, has an ' eagle of wisdom ' on one of its higher branches, and a *red cock* on the topmost bough, who awakens the gods from sleep and puts demons to flight. This agrees very closely with a Taoist myth ; while the earth-dragon at Ygdrasil's root is one of a world-wide series of dragons which guard hidden treasures, sacred sites, and so forth.

As wind-god, Odin is identified with the wild huntsman, a personage whom we meet in far-distant Malaya as well as nearer home.

Giants, dwarfs, and elves can be taken, in the main, to have been peoples with whom the 'Teutons' came in fairly close contact. Some of the elves were star-deities, and their cunning and wisdom remind us that a Chinese star-god, Wên Ch'ang, is a patron of learning. Dwarfs were often black or dark-coloured, and were makers of magic weapons.

Thor, the thunder-god, has been equated to Tarku, a storm-god of the Hittites of Asia Minor. Tarku also carries a hammer as a symbol of fertility—thunder and rain being of primary importance to the agricultural peoples of Central and Eastern Asia. The early Chinese spiral and 'key' patterns of ornamental motives have generally been interpreted by native antiquarians as emblems of 'thunder-clouds.'

'Despoilers of graves' were classified with traitors, cowards, and other criminals by the early Teutons, as by the Chinese.

The great 'world-mill' of the Teutonic gods, turned by nine female giants, ground out from the body of Ymer the mould of the earth, from which the gods fashioned all things. The Indian Chakra, or Wheel of Eternity, symbol of the operation of the inevitable Karma (fate), may have given rise to this story; or both may be variants of the same myth.

Four strong dwarfs (foreigners, perhaps Indian Dêva kings) supported the four corners of the Teutonic Universe. The familiar 'Jack and Jill' of our nursery rhyme, by the way, are really Hyuki and Bil, two children who were carried off from the earth by Mani, the charioteer of the moon. They had been sent by their father to fetch the magic mead of poetry from the hidden mountain spring, Byrger, which arose from the source of Mimer's fount (Mimer was the Teutonic god of memory). They filled their pail until it overflowed, and were waylaid and carried off, during their descent, by Mani. He kept them in the moon; and

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Bil was subsequently invoked by the 'skalds' or bards to give them poetical inspiration.

In the Chinese legend, the lady in the moon is Ch'ang-O, and she sought refuge there when she fled from her husband with the drug of immortality, which she had stolen from him. She was changed into a frog for her pains, but is still invoked in love-poems. No satisfactory explanation of this story is known to the writer.

The 'thornbush' in the (Teutonic) moon was used for the punishment of evil-doers, who were apparently thrashed with spiky rods in one of the cold 'hells' of Northern mythology.

At the northern summit of the old Teutonic heaven is a gigantic eagle, and whenever he travels across the sky the winds are driven by the movements of his wings. An early Taoist legend describes this bird as a denizen of the Northern ocean who can take the form of a fish or a bird at will; his wings stretch across the sky like clouds.

Both legends can be read to mean the ascent of water-vapour from the sea and its descent as rain. The Chinese most frequently typify this in the ascent and descent of the dragon; the bird-myth which they share with the Teutons may have been acquired from some third source.

The infusion by the gods of mind and will into two trees—an ash shaped as a man, and an alder as a woman—and the frequent reference to swan-maidens, are animistic myths showing that lack of distinction between human and other 'life' which is so strongly marked in Chinese folk-lore. Modern German and Hungarian folk-tales embody numerous instances of the same view of nature.

The nine realms of torment for the wicked may correspond to Dante's nine circles of hell. Dante is unlikely to have had access to Teutonic mythology,



or to have made any use of it if he had ; the coincidence is all the more interesting because Dante was an omnivorous reader, and cannot fail to have had opportunities of picking up Oriental legends and weaving them into his stupendous epic.

The Norse goddess, Idun, and the golden apples which she gave to the gods, to confer and preserve immortality, are a parallel to Hsi Wang Mu, the Western Queen Mother, and her magic peaches ; and the troubles and dissensions between the gods—during which Idun was abducted and the gods, deprived of her apples, began to grow old—succeeded the Golden Age which lies at the back of nearly every folk-tradition in the Old World.

During the wars of the gods, a demi-god, son of an elf, engages in a search for the lost magic sword of victory. He has no fear, for, says he, 'Our fates are spun when we are born. Our doom we can never escape.' The same sentiment is expressed by the Chinese cynic Wang Ch'ung in his criticism of omens and prodigies referred to elsewhere. The sword in question is eventually found in a cave, guarded by a wood-devil.

An iron shield, as one may expect, is considered efficacious against a fire dragon ; and to eat the heart of the wolf he had slain gave Hadding, a demi-god wedded to a giantess, the courage and ferocity of the animal. King Siggeris's mother was a were-wolf, and an eater of human flesh ; and two of his kindred, brothers, were able to don magic wolf-skins at will and devour men, like the uncannily clever were-tigers and were-wolves of Chinese legend.

A very typical 'foreign devil' is the stone giant, Hrungner, whose shield and weapons were also of stone. He was almost a match for the god Thor himself, and the Thunderer had to seek help from his son, whose mother was the iron-crusher of the great world

mill. Odin, himself of presumably foreign origin, destroyed an enemy who was not only gigantic but cunning; he received the name Jalk from the other gods when he slew the monster, and is familiar to us as 'Jack the Giant-Killer.'

Gigantic 'devils' are often quelled, by a mixture of boldness and cunning, in Chinese folk-lore, as we have seen in numerous instances.

Other references to demons, such as elves, trolls, dwarfs, etc., are fairly common. Dwarfs, dark-hued, swarm in mounds of earth, in the interior of rocks, or in very high, precipitous mountains. Trolls can fly and can change their shape. They are descended from three powerful demons. Demons enter a hall at night, fall upon sleeping warriors, and devour their flesh. In a far-away land is a city of dirt and gloom, peopled by sorrowing folk. Horrible shades and phantoms inhabit it; and treasures and ornaments, on being touched, turn into enormous snakes and fiery dragons.

The 'travellers' tales' of early Chinese navigators are much on the same lines.

The remaking and reform of the world, after the collapse and defeat of the gods, under a greater God than Odin, is no doubt a much modernised myth. If, however, we recall the tale of the world mill, and the Buddhist theory of endless cycles of growth and decay, another link may be forged between Teutonic and Asiatic legend.

When the semi-historic Beowulf was slain, a large grave-mound was erected over his cremated ashes; but, still more reminiscent of the East, vast treasures were deposited in the tumulus and buried beyond recovery. His armour had been made by some such magic smith as Ilmarinen of the Finnish epic. Also, as in Finland, the Teutons had 'runes' or spells for every emergency, especially those of love, war, and healing.

Of treasure-guarding dragons, it has been suggested that the caves in which they lurked were grave-chambers, where offerings of costly weapons and jewels were laid for the use of the dead. Grave-robbing was an eerie business, and was looked upon as a hideous sacrilege in East and West alike ; and any story likely to deter the impious would be sedulously spread abroad. Even European archæologists are not always free from misgivings when they disturb ancient sepulchres in the interests of science.

Without building too much on skull-measurements, it is noticeable that the great cultures of history are in all cases associated with peoples of mixed ancestry, *e.g.*, the Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Greeks, Romans and Chinese. Very long, narrow skulls are exceedingly common among low races ; very short, broad skulls, among nomads or cultivators of unprogressive character.

The oval skull—evidence of an almost equal mixture of two types—is commonest among races of long-lasting or otherwise notable culture-history. Around the Mediterranean there is a tendency to long skulls, and in Central and Eastern Europe a greater roundness is noticeable ; but ‘pure’ types are rare. The degree of ovalness, for example, is almost the same in England, among the educated Finns, and in China.

The much-debated Cimbrians, presumed, on what evidence we have, to be a cultural link between several prehistoric peoples, were very tall, and in skull formation resembled the oval-headed Scotch and one of the Swedish types. Their rock carvings included warriors in ‘Keltic’ helmets, solar emblems such as gilt discs and swastikas, tropical animals such as lions, ostriches and camels, and ships similar to those of ancient Egypt. Their round shields recall those of Homeric Greece, and their straight leaf-bladed swords those

found in all parts of Asia. Their clothing was similar to the old 'Keltic' dress still worn in stationary Albania, and their use of chariots would seem to connect them with the plains of High Asia. Like the early Chinese, they used kettle-shaped vessels for the blood, or gravy, of sacrificial victims, sometimes of silver; and small ornamental weapons of bronze, as charms or symbols, just as such articles in jade and other precious materials were fabricated in ancient China.

Many authorities attribute the beautiful objects found in Northern and Eastern Europe to Ur-Germaner, or 'primitive Germans,' a fact which shows how much those same *savants* (themselves Swedes and Germans) admire the relics of 'Cimbrian' civilization.

The moral certainty, however, that the god Odin, from the Norse point of view, was a foreign king, or chief, and the late date of so many Germanic objects that are not shared by them and the Kelts, may be noted, with the Roman and Greek writings, as evidence that the Teutonic and Slav invaders entered Europe long after the two great Keltic movements.

Swedish tradition says that the Goths and 'Asia folk' who accompanied Odin and introduced writing came from some place near the Black Sea or the Caspian; and both in Sweden and Finland many Arabian coins are found. At this point we must leave the Western frontier of Oriental myth and legend.

A certain amount of interest attaches to the confusing and almost undatable (if one may coin the word) tales and traditions of the opposite boundary of the Eurasian Continent—the Malay Peninsula.

Mr. W. W. Skeat's valuable researches in Malay magic introduce us to an odd compound of Arabian, Hindu and local legends. Between Mohammed's 'version' of the Old Testament on the one hand and the unsophisticated animism of the Indonesian jungle

on the other, we naturally find much that is common to Europe, China, and the Pacific Islands ; we can also compare the Eastern with the Western fringe of the 'Mongolic' spirit-world.

The animal-myths of the Malaysian peoples are notably akin to those of China.

We have the dragon (Rahu) or dog (Anjing) who tries to devour the sun and moon at times of eclipse ; mountain dragons who live in the limestone caves, and cause landslips by their sudden movements ; large crocodiles and tigers who contain the spirits of deceased Rajahs (though the Malays are Moslems !) ; white tigers and white elephants who have been the familiars of Mohammedan saints during their lifetime ; animal ghosts distinguished by having one footprint smaller than the rest ; and others too numerous to quote.

In the geomantic ritual of house-building, a dragon is one of the eight animals to which a magic song is sung. A woman, whose little boy fell into a river, was visited by him later on when he had become a were-crocodile ; and he imparted to her a charm against the hostility of the crocodile-spirit and the depredations of actual living crocodiles.

Snakes are believed to have a 'magical stone' (bezoar) in their heads, and, in certain instances, in their mouths. This is held to be a specific against snake-bite. Snakes are related to have fought for possession of these precious stones, as the two dragons of Chinese legend are depicted pursuing a 'pearl.'

The 'precious jewel' in the head of Shakespeare's toad is recalled by these stories, which are widely known but apparently quite unrelated to fact.

At a wealthy Malay wedding it is customary to bathe in water conveyed through a 'dragon's mouth' spout, and a charm is pronounced while the lustration of the happy pair takes place.

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Whether the 'gargoyles' on Christian edifices, whose primary use was to prevent storm-water from streaming down the walls and defacing or injuring them, retained their grotesque form as a survival of pre-Christian custom is not clear. Love of the grotesque for its own sake may have had something to do with this treatment of old church rain-spouts. (See China Society's publication, *The Grotesque in Chinese Art*, by the present writer.)

The tiger is naturally prominent in Malay folk-lore.

He is respectfully addressed as Grandfather (Datoh), and is often inhabited by a human soul. In the dim recesses of the jungle is a gruesome tiger city, the rafters of whose houses are human bones; the walls, human skins; and the thatch, human hair. The tiger is descended from a demon who, in human form, was thrashed by his schoolmaster with a rod of magic wood for his more than boyish misconduct, and driven out into the jungle. Ever since, he has borne the stripes left on his skin by the flogging of his ancestor.

Were-tigers are numerous, especially among a small tribe in Sumatra; probably a somewhat different race from the Malay peoples, and consequently regarded as 'foreign devils.' Ghostly tigers are the guardians of certain sacred shrines, the most famous of which is that of the Princess of Gunong Ledang. Her cat, on which she used to ride about, sometimes appears at night in the form of a handsome tiger, escorting the invisible spirit of the Princess.

The claws and whiskers of a tiger are potent charms.

Cats must not be allowed to rub against a corpse, lest they infuse into it a certain uncanny vitality. A pair of iron or steel scissors should always be left lying upon the breast of a corpse, as *iron* will expel the evil magic of the cat.

This tallies exactly with the Chinese belief as to cats

and corpses, and iron is, of course, an exorciser everywhere.

A medicine-man will call upon a tiger-spirit to enter him, and thus give him power to drive disease-devils out of the sick. Self-hypnotised, the medicine-man crawls about, growls, *draws blood* from his own arm, and goes through the movements of a fierce fight with the disease-demon which he has been hired to vanquish.

The *deer* is the outward form of the 'soul' of the metal gold, just as in China a deer-spirit is believed to haunt mines. Possibly on account of the erratic distribution of metalliferous lodes, Malay miners believe that the ore 'grows,' and moves about under the earth of its own accord.

A were-elephant, who was really a King's daughter, recalls the elephant-headed witch in Hungarian fairylore, and the elephant-god Ganpat in Hinduism.

The dugong, as in China, is considered uncanny; but the Malays detest it as being a variety of pig, which to them, as Moslems, is unclean.

Their chief bird-superstition centres upon the Garuda, the sacred 'eagle' of Vishnu, which is credited with a gigantic wing-spread like the polar 'wind-raising' bird of the Teutonic and Taoist mythologies. A human-headed bird has been seen on old Javanese pottery, which the discoverers liken to a sort of harpy. Possibly, as in Egypt, it symbolised one of the 'souls' of man. A Persian vessel, decorated with a 'harpy,' is to be seen in the Waddesdon Room at the British Museum.

A girl who turned into a ground-pigeon and flew away from her family is the subject of a Malay fairy-tale on somewhat Western lines; while a species of owl is much dreaded—as in China—for its love of the blood of newly-born infants. All night-flying birds are feared, to some extent, by the Malays.

The belief in the Wild Huntsman and in the un-

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canny birds which follow him and his hell-hounds through the night sky is almost identical with the English and German versions of the same legend.

Hunting and bird-snaring charms are in constant use, and Mr. Skeat connects the Orpheus tale of the Greeks with the success of some early 'wizard' in imitating the cries of animals and attracting them in order to kill them for food.

'Songs of origin,' as in Finland magic, enter into a high percentage of Malay charms. For example, when an elephant has been hunted and killed, the carcass is ceremonially beaten with the end of a black cloth, and the 'mischief' from the carcass is addressed :

'Badiyu, Mother of Mischief, Badi Panji, Blind Mother,  
I know the origin from which you sprang !  
Three drops of Adam's blood were the origin from which  
you sprang.

Mischief of Earth, return to Earth,  
Mischief of Ant-heap, return to Ant-heap,  
Mischief of Elephant, return to Elephant,  
Mischief of Wood, return to Wood,  
Mischief of Water, return to Water,  
Mischief of Stone, return to Stone,  
And inspire not any person !  
By the virtue of my teacher,  
You may not injure the children of the race of Man !'

On reaching a tin-bearing stratum, a song of origin is addressed to the tin-ore. In the specimen quoted by Mr. Skeat, the song attributes the origin of tin to dew, which turned into water, then into foam, and then into rock.

To become brave in battle and immune against one's enemies, a charm is sung beginning with the Mohammedan invocation :

'In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate,' but ending with :

'Of iron am I, and of copper is my frame,  
And my name is Tiger of God !'



Which is distinctly reminiscent of the metal-clad magician of the Finnish *Kalevala*.

A trick of the Malay Pawang or magician is to pretend to draw water from the blade of a kris (dagger). The chief part of the incantation is the assurance that he knows all about the origin of iron, and that the metal must obey his orders.

When spirits are asked to refrain from harming anyone, the person reciting the charm is careful to say that he knows their origin and habits ; this deprives them of their power to do evil.

The exorcising use of iron appears again in the ceremony of reaping and binding the sugar-cane. A large iron nail is tied up in the centre of a sheaf, while a female magician recites a Mohammedan prayer.

A sacred lump of iron forms part of the regalia of several Malay chiefs, and solemn oaths are sworn upon it ; a pair of scissors, as we have noticed, is placed on the breast of a corpse ; and an iron nail is kept in the rice jar near the sleeping place of a new-born child with the same idea. A jungle Malay will often plant his knife in a stream (its edge turned towards the source) before he will risk drinking of it ; and he will sit on the flat of his knife-blade when eating alone in the forest. When a baby is first put in its swinging cot (which is hung from the roof), the naked blade of a cutlass is put underneath the cot to scare away any vampire or other creature that may wish to suck the infant's blood. The corresponding magic value of swords in China has been gone into elsewhere.

Several varieties of vampire are feared, especially in connection with very young children.

A woman who died in child-birth and was reincarnated as a kind of night-bird is the worst of these. When she appears in human form, she is dressed in green, with long, black, unbound hair and sharp, claw-like nails. Another type has a detachable flying head,

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like certain 'devils' in Chinese folk-lore. Signing a Cross on a child's forehead with garlic, as in Eastern Europe, is one of the precautions taken by the Malays against vampires.

The drama is immensely popular with the Malays, and they usually ask one of the 'company' to utter a charm before beginning a play in order to protect the actors. Whenever possible, they enrol a professional wizard for this purpose. The sign of the Cross is part of this ritual; but whether it is a Christian importation or an invocation of the Dêva Kings of the Four Quarters of the Earth (a relic of Hinduism) is not clear. European actors are notoriously careful not to do anything 'unlucky' within the precincts of the theatre.

Sunset is the time when evil influences are strongest; and a fall of rain while the sun is still shining—especially at noon—is greatly dreaded. As a child, the writer remembers an old woman in England who always said that 'the devil was beating his grandmother' if rain fell during sunshine; she had no knowledge of any Malay superstitions and no chance of acquiring it.

The idea that a treasure lies buried at the place 'where the rainbow ends' is also shared by British and Malay folk-lore.

Hair-clippings and nail-parings of an enemy are an essential part of the puppets in which pins are stuck—in Malaya and everywhere else—by magicians hired to injure or kill him by their incantations. This practice is the stock example of 'sympathetic magic'—of injuring the whole by hurting a part—in all books on folk-lore and witchcraft, and need not be elaborated.

Native spirit-worship, Hindu importations, and the prevalent religion of Islam have all given of their wealth to Malay folk-lore; and the Malays have had frequent contact for many centuries with a variety of

peoples in all stages of civilisation. Their notion that certain wild jungle-tribes are *per se* more powerful than themselves (*i.e.*, the Malays) in controlling the spirits is on a par with Hindu beliefs in the wizardry of sundry non-Aryan aboriginals in the hills.

Such important matters as hunting edible birds or animals, building houses, and bearing children are naturally safeguarded by the recitation of charms ; and the hearth fire, and the rice-pot which mostly stands upon it, must never be stepped over by a properly-behaved Malay, any more than they would be by a Taoist.

Stone implements, relics of prehistoric times, are respected as having magical properties, and are called 'thunderbolts' both by the Malays and the Chinese ; and rice is thrown at Malay weddings, as in Europe.

Dangerous spirits are sometimes enclosed by spells in a joint of bamboo, and their 'master' can send them forth to injure his enemies. He is supposed to feed them regularly with offerings of eggs and milk, lest they should turn upon him and do him harm.

Another way of securing the services of a familiar spirit is to disinter the body of a first-born child, whose mother was also a first-born child, and bury its tongue, with certain rituals, at a place where three cross-roads meet. The gruesome relic is dug up again after three nights, when it will have become a familiar spirit. The whole performance is reminiscent of European witchcraft.

Demon-masks, to drive away evil, are common to Tibet, China, Japan, Indonesia and many of the Pacific Islands.

The nature of the soul, and its connection with the sum total of spiritual essence or life in the universe—whether the living creature be human, animal, or vegetable—are evidently regarded by the Malays from much the same point of view as the Chinese.

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From the consideration of beliefs common to many countries we shall turn, in our next chapter, to a kind of scepticism which is not nearly so common, though occasionally to be found in China and elsewhere. By virtue of its very human inconsistency, it must enter into our sketch of Chinese folk-lore, if only to illustrate the beliefs which it seeks to criticise.

## XIV

### A CHINESE SCEPTIC

To those who have read the foregoing tales of ghosts and goblins, the mention of a truly incredulous Chinese will perhaps be the greatest marvel of all.

Professor Alfred Forke, however, has introduced us to Wang Ch'ung, a materialistic writer who lived about A.D. 27 to A.D. 97. A man of wide reading and much mental vigour, he was never prosperous; and his bold criticism of the beliefs so firmly held by his contemporaries alienated the sympathies of many who may have admired his learning. He held a few unimportant positions from time to time, and died, a poor recluse, among his books.

From our point of view, his epicurean outlook is not so interesting as his profound knowledge of the folk-lore of his day, which he immortalised by his detailed attacks upon it. A part only of one of his works has survived—the *Lun Hêng* or 'Disquisitions.' It is not a complete exposition of his philosophy, but it reveals him as a thorough sceptic in all things concerning the other life, though rather indiscriminating in his acceptance of alleged material events.

We are told that in the famine year A.D. 76, when he was an official in a small way, he wrote an essay against dissipation and extravagance, and another in which he advocated the prohibition of drinking spirits! The chapters on Death and the Hereafter, in the *Lun Hêng*, were intended to curb excessive outlay on funerals—an obvious waste of energy in a country like China.

His philosophy will explain itself better than any preliminary 'disquisition,' if we glance at his attacks on the religion and customs of his time.

Like most Chinese thinkers, he was interested in the theory and practice of government; but he was by no means satisfied that a virtuous ruler, though a kind father to his people, always had a prosperous and contented state to rule. Affluence and peace were the outcome of a happy destiny, and were dependent on Heaven and time. Public morality was merely a matter of good and bad harvests! Altruism sprang from abundance, strife from indigence. Wang Ch'ung no doubt had in mind the historical fact that all serious rebellions are the result of want; individual morality would hardly interest one who believed only in 'matter.' Of course, he had no patience with those stoical 'worthies' who renounced pomp and wealth on principle, and thereby deprived themselves of the power of helping the needy.

He commented upon the unpractical nature of scholars, and the poor esteem in which the populace held them, in comparison with men of action; but he was a respecter of the Classics himself, and compared the man who does not let in the light of knowledge upon his mind to 'a mere dead body walking about.'

Wang Ch'ung accepted the Yang and the Yin, as spontaneous functions, more or less opposed or complementary to one another, and arising not out of a mysterious, immaterial Tao, but out of undifferentiated material chaos. Spiritual or higher things (says he) differ only from what is grosser as a vapour differs from a fluid or a solid; a difference of degree, not of kind. Hence his lively interest in all physical things, and his desire to explain all phenomena from 'natural' causes. He tried to use the methods of experimental physics at a time when science was a farrago of wild guesses and grotesque parables, and, of course, he

failed. His view of fate reminds one of Taoism, but his entirely atheistic idea of the automatic working of the Universe is not unlike the Buddhist theory of Karma.

He considered most sacrifices and religious practices either (*a*) as superfluous, because spirits were only mist and vapour, and could neither enjoy the sacrifices nor injure the living, or (*b*) as inadequate, because the earth, sacred mountains, rivers, etc., if they had bodies, would require enormous quantities of food as offerings—more than men could supply.

His inability—apparently quite honest—to realise that anything but matter is real will show itself in the anecdotes, and the comments thereon, which enliven his pages.

A man in the district of Sung was dissatisfied at the slow growth of his corn, so he pulled the stalks upwards; and they all died! Anyone, says Wang Ch'ung, who interferes with the spontaneous operations of Nature is like the silly rustic of Sung.

As Fate arranges things irrespective of man's virtues or vices, Wang Ch'ung believed that Heaven sent omens and portents to show those on the earth that certain persons were predestined for greatness, or that some unusual event was about to happen.

Huang Ti (2697 B.C.) could speak as soon as he was born. Yao's body (2356 B.C.), when viewed at close quarters, was like the sun; at a distance he appeared like a cloud. Shun (2255 B.C.) was immune against the tigers and venomous snakes of the jungle, and attempts to assassinate him were always fruitless. He was suddenly, almost unexpectedly, elevated to the Imperial Throne.

Kuang Kuo, a younger brother of the Empress Tou (second century B.C.), was kidnapped and sold into

slavery as a tiny child. One cold night, while he was working as a charcoal-burner, he and a group of poor people like himself took shelter under the lee of a heap of charcoal. The heap collapsed in the night and buried all except Kuang Kuo. He then had recourse to divination, and found that he was destined to high rank. He made his way to court, proved his identity, and received the title of Marquis of Chang Wu. His preservation from burial under the charcoal, which had destroyed all his companions, was an omen that he alone was predestined to greatness.

A certain Kuang Wên Po was born about midnight. At the moment of his birth a voice outside the house called his father by name. The father went out, but nobody was there; he merely found a great wooden stake planted by the door. He took it into the house and showed it to a diviner, who said :

‘This is a very lucky omen. Your son will study and become Prefect of Kuang Lan.’

The diviner implied, observes Wang Ch’ung, ‘that the stake represented the strength of the child.’

One is reminded of totem-poles, and of trees (particularly willows) in which the ‘soul’ or spiritual essence of a human being is lodged, in sundry folk-tales.

Another worthy is mentioned by our ‘sceptical’ writer, who could distinguish lucky from unlucky winds simply by inhaling the air. But a little later he goes on to say that divination is useless, Heaven is far off, and does not speak; man uses stalks of plants and scraps of tortoiseshell ‘to help him make up his mind.’ The omens he reads into them are only his own thoughts. The spontaneous action of Heaven deals out good and bad luck, and the dead sticks of a plant or shells of a tortoise can tell you nothing.



When a man dies, his Kuei (lower soul) returns to earth with his bones, and his Shên (spiritual nature, higher soul, Hun) becomes diffused like air or vapour.

The 'spiritual fluid' becomes man, as water becomes ice. When ice melts, it again becomes water; when man dies, his vitality returns to the general fund of 'vital fluid' in the Universe. If ghosts and dreams appear in the forms of dead men—whose bodies are decayed and formless—how can they be the persons they seem to resemble?

The five virtues of man—benevolence, justice, propriety, knowledge, and truth—reside in the five organs of the body—to wit, the heart, the liver, the stomach, the lungs, and the kidneys. At death the organs decompose; the virtues have no abiding-place; the intelligence disappears.

Sleep, trance and death are much alike. When a medium in trance professes to speak for the dead, he is just lying and bragging. Either he raves, or the manifestation is due to some living person.

Where the bones of the dead lie unburied, mournful cries are heard, especially on autumn nights. But these bones have no mouth or throat, just as a broken flute does not retain the air; how, then, can they mourn? If any wailing does occur, some living creature is the cause of it.

The following spook-story is recounted by Wang Ch'ung in order to be discredited.

Duke Ling of Wei (533-499 B.C.) was on his way to Chin. On the banks of the River Pu (on the border of Shan Tung), he heard an unknown air being played on a guitar; and it pleased him so much that he ordered his attendants to make enquiries about it. But they had heard nothing. So he sent for his music master, Chüan, and said to him:

'There was someone playing a new melody, so I

told my followers to make enquiries about it. They all said they had heard nothing. It is as if a ghost had made the music. Please listen to it and write it down for me.'

The music master obeyed. He sat down, played his guitar, and wrote out the tune. Next morning he said he had recorded it, but still required some practice. He worked at it one more night, and the next morning he had mastered it.

The Duke Ling and his retinue went on to Chin, and Duke P'ing entertained them.

When they had drunk together, Ling rose and said, 'I have heard a new tune which I should like to have played to your Highness.'

So the music master, Chüan, was sent for, and sat down beside the Chin music master, Kuang, to play his guitar and sing the ghost song. Before the song was ended Kuang grasped the guitar and begged him to stop, saying, 'This is a song of a doomed State. You must not go on with it.'

'Where does it come from?' asked Duke P'ing.

The music master, Kuang, replied, 'It is an evil tune composed by the music master, Yen, for Chou. Wu Wang executed Chou (the last and worst Emperor of the Yin Dynasty, 1154-1122 B.C.); Yen fled and drowned himself in the River Pu. To hear this tune one must visit the banks of the Pu. In the past, if anyone heard it, his State was wiped out; do not finish playing it.'

Duke P'ing replied, 'I am very fond of music. I want to hear all of it,' so Chüan continued playing and singing the ill-omened melody.

A discussion on music followed, the meaning of which is a little difficult to follow, and then the Chin music master, Kuang, played a very plaintive air.

When he played the first part, sixteen black cranes flew up from the south and alighted upon the outer

gate. When he played the next part, they arranged themselves in rows; and during the third 'movement,' they flapped their wings, stretched their necks and danced.

The sound of the finale rang out clear and true, and rose to heaven. Duke P'ing and his guests, enraptured, drank to Kuang, standing. When the Duke sat down, he asked Kuang for a still more plaintive melody.

'There is a tune,' replied Kuang, 'which Huang Ti of yore played, when he assembled the ghosts and spirits on Mount T'ai. He rode in an ivory carriage drawn by six black dragons. The Pi Fang bird accompanied the chariot; the Wind Spirit swept the road and the Rain Spirit sprinkled it. Tigers and wolves went in front, ghosts and spirits in the rear; reptiles crawled on the ground, and white clouds covered the sky.'

'I doubt if your Highness could bear to hear the tune played by Huang Ti on that occasion. Your virtue is small, and I fear the tune would be your ruin.'

Duke P'ing replied, 'I am an old man, and I love music. I should like to hear it.'

Kuang had no choice, so he sat down and began to play. At once clouds gathered from the north-west; a torrential rainstorm broke; the tents were torn to ribbons, plates and dishes broken, and tiles hurled down from the veranda roof. The panic-stricken assembly broke up, and the Duke P'ing fell to the ground in terror. For three years after the State of Chin was devastated by a drought, and the Duke's health gradually failed.

'What does all this mean?' asks Wang Ch'ung. Wei, the State of Duke Ling, was not ruined, though P'ing fell sick and Chin was afflicted by drought. Both States were not destroyed, so the influence of the unlucky tune could not have been supernatural. How

could Yen, after death, have played the guitar with his decayed hands? And more to the same effect.

In the year during which Ch'in Shih Huang Ti died, the Han Emperor, Kao Tsu (who succeeded him 202 B.C), was still a mere village elder.

One of his duties was to escort convicts to their forced labour on Mount Li, in Shan Si. On one occasion a great number broke away on the road, so he let the remainder escape also. Kao Tsu, who had been drinking, continued his journey, and at nightfall, in a certain marsh, a man whom he had ordered to travel in front of him came back and reported that there was a gigantic snake on the road, and that he had better go back.

'What does a brave soldier fear?' cried the inebriated Kao Tsu; whereupon he advanced, drew his sword, and cut the snake in two with a single stroke. Then he went ahead for some miles, and lay down to sleep off the effects of the wine.

When his followers reached the body of the snake, they found an old woman wailing over it. 'A man has killed my son!' she cried.

'How was he killed?' asked the retainers of Kao Tsu.

'My son,' said the woman, 'the son of the White Emperor, was turned into a snake to keep watch on this path. Now the son of the Red Emperor has slain him; that is why I mourn.'

The men thought she was making up a ghost story, and would have seized her, when she suddenly vanished.

(The White Emperor, it appears, was the Ch'in ruler, to whom white and the element 'metal' were sacred; the Han, who superseded his house, honoured 'fire' and the colour red.)

Wang Ch'ung apparently accepts this story as an omen of Kao Tsu's future greatness, but says that the

snake and the old woman were merely 'fluid,' and not genuine serpent and human creature.

'Fluid' is his usual term for the 'virtue' or 'emanation' of the Yang and Yin principles which automatically function, and produce all things in the material universe; the operation of some 'fluid' is his explanation of anything he does not understand, but is not quite prepared to discredit.

The ways of heaven, he says, are hard to understand. There are apparitions when things go well, and sometimes, also, when things go wrong.

Chang Liang, Marquis of Liu, having made an attempt on the Emperor's life which missed fire, changed his name and fled to a distant province. On the banks of the River Ssu he settled, and an old man, coarsely attired, came to him one day from a place some distance down the river and said to him, 'Go along and fetch me my shoe, my lad; I have left it down the river.' Chang Liang was deeply affronted, but something about the looks of the old man, who was very vigorous of frame, prompted him to control his anger. He fetched the shoe, and offered it, on his knees, to the strange old man. The latter laughed, slipped on his shoe, and went away.

Presently he returned and said to Chang Liang, 'You can be taught, my boy. Meet me here five days hence at sunrise.'

Chang Liang was astonished, but knelt down and agreed to the proposition. He went five days later to the appointed place at sunrise, but the old man was there already.

'What do you mean by coming late to keep an appointment with an old man?' cried he angrily. 'Come again five days from now, very early.'

Again Chang Liang met the old man, this time at cock-crow, but the old man was already there, and

scolded him, telling him to be earlier at the next meeting, five days ahead.

Chang Liang thereupon went to the appointed place just before midnight; the old man had not arrived, but came soon after, and was very pleased with him.

The mysterious grey-beard then produced a short written treatise which he handed to Chang Liang, saying, 'Read this, and you will become an Emperor's teacher. You will see me again thirteen years hence; I am a yellow stone at the foot of Mount Ku Chêng in Ch'i Pei.' Then he vanished.

At dawn Chang Liang looked at the book, and saw that it was T'ai Kung's *Strategy*. He studied it very assiduously, helped to quell a rebellion in 209 B.C., and was made Marquis of Liu. Thirteen years after the disappearance of the old man he went with the Han Emperor Kao Tsu to Mount Ku Chêng, found the yellow stone, and made obeisance to it. He kept it for the rest of his life, and had it buried with him.

The very ancient animistic belief which endowed the yellow stone with life is more interesting than our 'sceptic's' dismissal of it as being a 'supernatural transformation,' specially arranged by heaven as an omen. A man, he remarks, cannot turn into a stone, nor a stone into a man. The appearance of a supernatural portent made it seem so.

Wang Ch'ung's theories of 'attenuated matter,' or mental 'fluid' energising the universe, really put him in a more difficult position than one who accepted spirit as being different from matter.

His views on 'ghost seeing' were not quite so illogical. He thought that ghosts were not the vital spirits of the dead, but were caused by the intense thinking and meditating of the living. They originated, he said, with sick people.

The sick are melancholy, apprehensive, and easily

frightened. Their fears set them pondering and imagining, and visions arise before their eyes. It will be remembered that the subjective element is by no means unrecognised by ordinary writers on ghost-lore in China; and we have seen that brave and upright men can often drive away demons and lay spooks simply by not fearing them.

Wang Ch'ung's statement that the sick think the pains in their bones are due to ghostly beatings and other spirit-inflicted injuries is merely another way of saying that disease-demons are held responsible for suffering and illness. He quotes another theory, according to which 'the fluid of sickness' imitates the human form, comes in contact with people, and is called a 'ghost'; and another to the effect that the 'vital fluid' of the aged and the infirm, in human form, comes in contact with the sick, and they 'see ghosts.'

When Chuan Hsü's three sons died (twenty-sixth century B.C.) they became the ghosts of epidemics. One, who abode in the Yang Tzŭ, became the Fever Ghost; the second, in the Jo River, became a Water Spirit; and the third, who lurked in the corners of houses and in damp store-rooms, became a bogie that frightens children.

When writing was invented (by a mythical personage supposed to have lived about the twenty-eighth century B.C.) 'the ghosts wept at night and the dragons withdrew themselves from view.' If the 'fluid' can imitate the sound of weeping, it can imitate the appearance of a human body.

Apparently, in the days of Wang Ch'ung popular songs, 'catch phrases,' and even the quaint rhymes and sayings of children were looked upon as portents of future events.

It is conceivable that vernacular ballads had some

political significance in ancient China as elsewhere, and that 'nursery rhymes' were veiled allusions to things of which children would not grasp the true meaning; thus the inconvenient candour of 'babes and sucklings,' shrewdly interpreted by a wise ruler, would often throw an unexpected light on the psychology of the ruled.

Some such idea may have been in the mind of the Japanese Emperor Tenji, who, at the death of his mother, the Empress Saimei (A.D. 661), dwelt for some time in a rude wooden hut within hearing of the populace passing by and shouting and calling to one another. (Manyoshiu.)

When Tsou Yen, a scholar of the fourth century B.C., was unjustly imprisoned, he looked up to heaven and wept. At once snow began to fall, though it was midsummer. But, says our 'sceptic,' if the death of one man produces cold, does the weather get warm when a man is born? Certain scholars contemporary with him put a *moral* construction on all matters affecting the weather and the crops, thereby seeking to show that heaven requites all deeds (good or evil) in this life; in opposition to them, Wang Ch'ung emphasises the spontaneity of rain and drought, famine and plenty.

Human beings with a malformation or oddity of any kind were believed in old China to show thereby an indication of unusual ability or a foreshadowing of future greatness.

An early Emperor had a 'dragon's face'; another had the character 'noon' on his brow; another had eyebrows of eight colours; another had double pupils to his eyes; another had double elbows; and so forth. There is no evident reason for these peculiar traditions.

We are told that the prime minister Huang Tz'ü Kung, while still a minor official, was travelling in the



same carriage with a diviner, who drew his attention to a girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age. The diviner said :

‘ This woman will be raised to high honours, and will be the wife of a Marquis.’

Huang stopped the carriage and looked at the girl.

The soothsayer went on, ‘ If she does not become noble, all my divination books are useless.’

Huang made enquiries, and found out that she was a Miss Wu, a native of a neighbouring village. He married her, and was made prime minister with the title of Marquis. (About 50 B.C.)

Although popular Taoism rests largely on the dogma of the automatic or spontaneous nature of fate, and the omens from which men endeavour to forecast it, Wang Ch’ung quotes with scorn a number of Taoist legends, which he dismisses as impossible.

Thus a certain Hsiang Man Tu, a student of spiritualism, unexpectedly disappeared for three years. On his return he gave the following account of himself :—

‘ I have no clear recollection of my departure, but I suddenly found myself, as it were, lying down. Several immortals appeared and carried me up into the heavens, until I was quite close to the moon. Above and below the moon all was dark, and I was unable to tell the east from the west. (I lost my sense of direction.) It was very cold, and I was hungry, but an immortal gave me a cupful of “morning-red,” which took away the feeling of hunger for several months. Eventually, for no reason that I am aware of, I found myself asleep again, and I was brought back.’

Wang Ch’ung says that Hsiang concocted this story to cover his failure, after three years’ effort, to become a Taoist adept.

In the days of the Han Emperor Wu Ti (140-85 B.C.), a certain Li Shao Chün held that by eating no corn and by regularly sacrificing to the Hearth Spirit he was able to ward off old age. He saw the Emperor, and had high honours conferred on him.

Li was evidently a shrewd fellow. He kept the date and place of his birth secret; he did not marry, and went on visits from one Prince's court to another, always giving out that he was seventy years old. People believed that he had the secret of not ageing with the lapse of time, and presented him with rich gifts; he was not seen to transact any business, but was always well-to-do. His 'credit' was excellent everywhere, and most people who met him were anxious to win his good opinion and keep it.

On one occasion, feasting with the Marquis of Wu An, he met a man over ninety years of age, and talked glibly with him of the places where his grandfather used to hunt—and of which he had heard as a child—as if he had been there himself. Everyone was bewildered.

Another time he told the Emperor where an old bronze vase came from, and mentioned where it stood more than five hundred years previously, giving the impression that he had seen it there.

This very successful impostor died of an ordinary illness some years after the incident of the bronze vase.

Wang Ch'ung explains that Li was evidently a man of good physique and healthy aspect; that he was of a peaceful temperament, and enjoyed exaggerating his age and posing as an older man than he really was; above all, that he must have been a good guesser and bluffer, whom nothing could disconcert. With such qualifications Li would have been quite at home in London or New York in the present year of grace, and would have made an admirable financier!

Wang Ch'ung believed in dragons, and quoted many old and quaint sayings about them, but was honest enough to assert that as in his philosophy man was the noblest thing produced by heaven and earth, the dragon, as a mere animal, was inferior to man, and could not possess spiritual powers that man had not. A hardy spirit, indeed, was Wang Ch'ung.

The *Shan Hai Ching* related that, beyond the four seas, men rode on dragon-snakes. Dragons were therefore akin both to snakes and horses, and were often depicted with horses' heads and snakes' tails.

Other tales, of dragons being domesticated, used as beasts of burden, or killed and eaten in remote antiquity, were quoted by Wang Ch'ung from the same source to show the absurdity of believing that the dragon was a spirit or superhuman creature, and could rise to heaven or descend from the clouds at will.

As regards the phoenix, he repeated the statement that a specimen of this auspicious bird alighted in the Shang Lin Park during the first century B.C. It was five Chinese feet in height, with beautiful variegated feathers; and flocks of other birds gathered in thousands and tens of thousands around it.

The argument that, after all, it may not have been a true phoenix merely because all the other birds came around it, is not convincing. Apparently our 'sceptic' was not prepared to deny that a phoenix has been known to appear, but did not accept every alleged phoenix as genuine.

The more refined a song is, says Wang Ch'ung, the fewer are the persons who can sing it; the more disinterested a man is, the fewer are his sympathisers. To think a bird to be a phoenix because many others gather round it is like saying a song is good because many can sing it.

During the reign of Wang Mang (first century A.D.), a bird as big as a horse, having variegated 'dragon-

like 'plumage, alighted at a certain spot in An Hui, along with a flock of other birds. This creature, like the red crow which appeared to Wu Wang (1122 B.C.) and the vermilion grass which grew in the courtyard of the Emperor Yao (2356 B.C.), with unicorns, 'spiritual' tortoises, and the like, 'originated from a propitious fluid.'

The spontaneous action of this wonder-working 'fluid' is also credited by Wang Ch'ung with the transmutation—firmly believed in at that time—of one kind of animal into another. He gravely quotes the statements that in spring the eagle turns into a pigeon, and in autumn the pigeon becomes an eagle again; that snakes and mice become fish and turtles, frogs become quails, and sparrows become clams. Why, then, in peaceful and lucky times, should not a deer become a unicorn or a snow-goose become a phoenix?

With the same delightful simplicity he quotes the stories of this personage being the daughter of a black lizard, and that being the son of a brown bear. He speaks of five kinds of phoenix, distinguishable by their colour; of sweet dew falling, and other prodigies. He allows that portents are hard to know, though easy to understand, and that omens are all true.

Though he combats the idea that the soul is immaterial, and the general belief that it survives death, he invests his 'fluid'—auspicious or otherwise—with qualities which no one else would attempt to account for on merely physical grounds. He was, from our point of view, as uncritical and credulous, within his own self-made limits, as the people around him.

He mentions that the Taoists melt five kinds of stone, and make 'five-coloured gems' out of them, which have the lustre of real gems. Also a 'Marquis of Sui,' who cured a wounded snake and was presented by the grateful creature with a lustrous pearl.

Sui's pearls figure largely in Chinese literature, and Wang Ch'ung says he was able to make them out of chemicals! It is hard to see how such a story could have originated unless some kind of spurious gem was actually manufactured by the parties referred to.

Those interested in the subject of alchemy will notice that there can have been no question of Arab research and little likelihood of any other foreign help in the Taoists' attempts at 'synthetic' jewel-imitation before the Christian era. Chinese 'alchemy' is more likely to have been the outcome of their own animistic belief in the essential unity of all things.

Wang Ch'ung has a good deal to say about the vague and inconsistent statements to be found in the Classics, but his criticisms of Confucius, Mencius and the rest are too long-winded and pointless to be inflicted upon the reader. He was evidently irritated at the reverence paid to the ancient writings, and perhaps more than a little jealous of the esteem lavished upon these sages by his countrymen.

More to the purpose are his references to the belief—common to China and other countries—that in olden times people were taller, handsomer, longer-lived, and better than in his day.

Heaven, he retorts, is the same heaven as of yore. The 'fluids' are the same—the Yang and the Yin—and operate in the same manner. Animals, trees, insects, and all natural objects have their 'standard sizes'—why should men have been different? Fire has always been fire, water has always been water. Are we to believe that, as time goes on, men will become as small as flower-seeds, very ugly, and as short-lived as a mayfly? Is it not strange that even if anything wonderful *does* happen in later times no one will believe it?

He mentions several contemporary men who were giants, of whom one was the son of a dwarf, and quotes the statement that in olden times hunchbacks were employed as gate-keepers and dwarfs as actors. How, then, could everyone have been tall and handsome?

The tradition of a state of simple, innocent happiness in the remote past is common to a large number of peoples, as we have had occasion to notice in connection with 'ancestor-worship.' Before the human race was very numerous, before it had spread from its cradleland into places where the struggle for food and against climatic and other conditions made life harder, one may reasonably argue that a certain degree of comfort must have been attainable. Archæological evidence, and such traditions as remain, point to the beginning of culture in a warm climate; and South-Western Asia appears, at our present state of knowledge, to have fulfilled the requisite conditions from the remote past down to the dawn of mythology. Between the glacial periods man seems to have ventured forth from the warmer regions, and to have retreated, in due course, before the encroaching cold, throughout the Eurasian area; and the continuity of his traditions, and the contact at one time or another of all the races of the Old World is shown by the similarity of folk-tales, and particularly by the dim memory of the 'earthly paradise' in which he spent the first part of his sojourn upon the globe.

The Biblical account of early man—quite apart from its religious significance—is interesting to believers and sceptics alike, in view of this widespread tradition; and it must not be forgotten that it was written in a land in close and continuous contact with those countries in which the earliest traces of human culture have been discovered.

Returning to Wang Ch'ung, we must note that he quotes a number of passages from the Classics and the historical records, which were no doubt figures of speech in many instances, but which he stigmatised as exaggerations and falsehoods. For example, that the wicked Emperor Chou had superhuman strength ; that he could twist iron, straighten out a hook, and pull a beam from a building and replace it by a pillar ; that Wên Wang (1231-1135 B.C.), the model of princely virtue, so often praised in the Classics, could drink a thousand bumpers of wine ; that even Confucius could drink a hundred gallons ! That the semi-mythical Emperors Yao and Shun were so thrifty that they sheltered themselves under 'untrimmed thatch and unhewn rafters' ; that the minister of state, Yang Yu Chi (Chou Dynasty), was so good an archer that he could hit an aspen leaf a hundred times running ; that another crack shot, Hsiung Ch'ü, could shoot an arrow into a hard stone, burying it up to the feathers ; that Lu Pan, a wood carver, contemporary with Confucius, made a kite which flew three days without coming down, and that he provided his mother with a carriage, driver and horses of wood, in which the good lady drove away, and was never seen again ! That the book-worm, Tung Chung Shu (second century B.C.), was so absorbed in studying the historical classic, *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, that for three years he did not once deign to glance at the trees and flowers in his garden ; and a host of others even less interesting.

Wang Ch'ung's criticisms show that he took these observations as if they were to be read literally, and therefore had no trouble in dismissing them as impossible.

In attacking the offering of sacrifices he is a little more cautious.

Sacrifices are correct, he says, but to believe that spirits are affected by them is incorrect. Sacrifices are merely signs of gratitude. Heaven, earth, hills and rivers, ghosts and spirits have no mouth or nose to eat flesh or smell incense with ; and our puny offerings would be quite inadequate if they did.

‘When men have died, they are dreaded,’ say the Classics. But this is only because they are no longer like us, says Wang Ch’ung ; their bodies decay and disappear, and they can therefore have no further communication with the living. But in another part of the same chapter he says ‘a ghost is a spirit, and spirits can foretell the future.’ Probably, in his secret heart, he was very much afraid of ghosts, and had no valid arguments with which to fight his fears.

He tells a little tale of a dog which Confucius had bred. When the dog died the sage asked his disciple, Tzū Kung, to bury it.

‘I have been told,’ said he, ‘that one does not throw an old curtain away, but uses it to bury a horse ; and that an old cart-cover is not thrown away, but is used to bury a dog. I am poor, and have no cover to wrap him in.’

So Confucius gave Tzū Kung a mat, and instructed him not to throw the dog down head first.

The sage’s affection for his pet dog showed itself in this way, says Wang Ch’ung, just as other people show respect and gratitude to the spirits by making (useless) sacrifices in their honour.

Exorcism, he explains, begins with the ceremony of making an offering. This is just like a banquet given to human guests. First the ghosts are entertained as guests ; then, when they are presumed to have eaten their meal, they are driven away with swords and sticks. If the ghosts and spirits were conscious, they would resent this sort of treatment and retaliate ; they would become angry and cause misfortune. If they



were not conscious, they would be unaware of the insult, and nothing would ensue. But we know nothing of their shapes or of their feelings.

Exorcism, whichever way we look at it, is therefore either meaningless or likely to do more harm than good.

When sick people see ghosts (and sickness is the cause of their seeing them), these ghosts must of necessity be guests of the Twelve Spirits of the House. These twelve spirits are phantoms of rank and standing, and no spirits or goblins would dare to enter the house except as their welcome guests. If exorcism is used to drive the disease ghosts out, will that not offend their hosts? Of course, says our worthy 'sceptic,' if there are *no* House Spirits, there are no disease goblins or 'flying corpses' (vampires)—so why exorcise?

Man and man's virtue, not sacrifices and exorcisms—these are the things that matter. Good fortune and bad, long life and premature death are matters of destiny. Sacrifices do not bring happiness, and there are no ghosts or spirits either to receive pleasure from offerings, or to be ignominiously bundled out by exorcisms. And that's all there is to be said about it. Thus Wang Ch'ung.

The scepticism of which he makes so great a parade was, as we have seen, only skin-deep; and in this respect he reminds one more of those Western unbelievers who retain a tendency to superstition than of the matter-of-fact Victorian devotees of physical science who flatly refused to acknowledge what they could not verify by physical or chemical experiment.

Our final chapter, on Spiritualism as practised in China, will exemplify, to those interested in the subject, the outlook of West and East alike in the common craving for knowledge of the other life apart from—

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and even in opposition to—the prevailing religious beliefs about man and his hereafter; the common ground across which the illogical unbeliever and the superstitious doubter wander into the borderland of danger.

## XV

### SPIRITUALISM

As the Chinese seem to regard the future life as in many respects a replica of life on earth, no one will wonder at their trying to communicate with the spirits of the departed. It is well known that attempts to learn the secrets of the hereafter are not peculiar to any time or place, and the procedure is much the same in China as here, apart from minor details.

A kind of 'planchette,' for example, is widely used by the Chinese. It consists of a large V-shaped wooden fork, like the 'wish-bone' of a fowl, with a pointed wooden 'pencil' attached to the apex of the V. The pencil is at right angles to the fork, so that when the instrument is in a horizontal position the 'pencil' is directed vertically downwards.

The pencil-point is held over a dish of sand, each arm of the fork being grasped by one of the two operators, who are generally Taoist priests; the favourite place for such manifestations being a temple of that cult.

The enquirer writes his question on a piece of paper, folds it up, and either lays it on the altar of the temple or burns it before the god. Incense is then lit and set smouldering, and the pencil is rapidly whirled round and round by the priests, its point in the sand. Suddenly the whirling stops, and a character is traced in the sand. More whirling takes place between the writing of each character. As the writing goes on a clerk copies it character by character. The final reply

is generally expressed in a brief and not too precise poem.

Some kind of trance or catalepsy, and particularly the temporary possession of the magician or 'medium' by another entity, are recounted in a number of tales; and it has been noticed that neither in China nor in the West are the alleged sayings of deceased relatives and friends to be depended upon as coming from them. It is freely acknowledged that ambiguous and untruthful 'messages' are often received from mischievous spirits. Sometimes, after repeated offerings, a materialisation occurs; sometimes, at a séance in a dark room, in European fashion, articles of clothing are forcibly removed to the most unlikely places, as if entities of the *poltergeist* type were present.

The elements of secrecy and sorcery are in themselves sufficient reasons for the authorities in China to look with much disfavour upon spiritualism; and in this respect they are at one with the regulations of the Old Testament and the discipline of dogmatic Christianity. On the other hand, ancestor-worship and Taoist magic undoubtedly account for many attempts to 'work the oracle' among a credulous and imaginative people. Sceptical Europe and novelty-hunting North America, it is to be feared, are not in a position, at present, to be too hard on China in this respect; but we must leave this controversial ground and glance at a few Chinese folk-tales bearing on spiritualism.

An example of 'spirit-writing' without the planchette is given in the following story, which goes back—as so many spook tales do—to the T'ang Period.

Early in the official career of a feudal prince of Wei, a countryman named Wang sought an interview with him. The prince invited the man to sit down, and the stranger Wang said, 'I can find out things about the unseen world.'

The prince was not impressed, so Wang instructed him to arrange a table in an inner room with paper, a writing-brush, incense and water ; then to leave the room empty and lower the mat curtain which veiled the entrance. They did this, and sat down in silence to wait in the western gallery of the house. Presently Wang invited the prince to go in with him and see what had happened. On the paper had been written eight unusually large characters, reading, 'Your dignity will be that of a very high official ; you will live until your sixty-fourth year.' Wang then hastily took his leave and went home. The man was never seen or heard of again ; but some years later the prince was three times registered as an imperial official of important rank, and lived to be sixty-four years of age.

Another tale is of one Chi Ch'ien, a petty official who practised automatic writing on the night of the full moon in the first month of the year. The method he used was to cover a plate with flour and place it over a wicker tray, with a chopstick stuck into it that it might write on the flour. A cloth cover was then placed over the tray. One night his family, more in jest than in earnest, set out the apparatus, saying, 'Please tell us what rank Chi Ch'ien will attain.' So the chopstick wrote on the tray, 'He will live to be over fifty ; I can tell you no more about him. But his friend, Ching Yuen Ch'u, will remain poor and out of office, and will die at forty-eight.' Chi Ch'ien became a judge subsequently, and died at fifty-one ; Ching died of disease one day after he received a less important post, in his forty-eighth year.

A certain Li was most successful at automatic writing when he was in his cups, and used no planchette for the purpose. Those who consulted him wrote their requests on paper, rolled it up tightly, and consumed it, with a piece of incense and some gold paper, in a censer, repeating the question aloud while it

burned. Then the medium would drink right off a quantity of spirits, grind some ink, and rapidly write page after page of large characters. Now and again, the story-teller shrewdly adds, his answers were quite relevant.

The unusually large size of Chinese 'spirit-writing' may be due to the fact that sticks, furrowing sand or flour, are not likely to give a legible result unless the characters are big; but it is curious that in Europe the abnormal *minuteness* of automatic writing is more frequently remarked. Large characters, if well written, have an imposing effect, and must add considerably to the impressiveness of the manifestations in the eyes of the Chinese.

In the year A.D. 1112 some people in Ho Nan invoked a minor divinity on the fifteenth of the first moon, and she wrote them an oracle in characters a foot long. One of the company then asked the spirit, 'Can you write larger?'

The reply came, 'Paste together two hundred large maps, and I will write the single character Fu, "happiness," on the sheet.'

Someone else said, 'What about a writing-brush?'

So the spirit answered, 'Fasten together ten pounds of hemp, making a brush two feet in diameter; and prepare a big tub of wet paint.'

So the paper sheets were stuck together and laid out in a cornfield, and the spirit said, 'Procure a man willing to have the brush hung round his neck.' The man's body rose in the air and moved about over the field, tracing the huge character plainly and neatly, although he felt nothing.

When the Emperor heard of this he ordered the manifestation to be repeated in the palace grounds. A lucky word was again written, of the same size and

in the same manner ; a temple was thereupon erected to the spirit, and sacrifice made to her annually.

In certain parts of the country the litter in which images are periodically carried in procession is used as a planchette. The end of a shaft of the litter is moved unsteadily in the dust or sand on the divining-table, the bearers shifting their burden erratically for the purpose ; the theory being that the personage whose image is borne on the litter pushes the bearers this way and that, thus causing the shaft to make marks in the sand.

It is, of course, generally accepted that any article connected with the worship or propitiation of spirits is likely to be effectual as a means of transmitting messages or omens attributed to their agency.

Do the Chinese have ' mediums,' as in the West ?

The term Wu seems to have been used from very early times to mean ' witch-doctor,' ' medicine-man,' ' shaman,' or whichever expression best defines the primitive priests of Animism. Their songs, gestures and dances, in China and other countries, were supposed to invoke good and exorcise evil spirits ; particularly to pray for rain. The earliest written records of China show that Wu of both sexes had their proper ranks and duties. Sometimes they had attacks of cataleptic rigidity, sometimes they moved and cried out as if under the control of other beings ; therein no way differing from their compeers throughout Asia, North America and the South Sea Islands.

From a reference in the Confucian sacred books, it was evidently usual in ancient times for men and boys to dash into the rivers, and then dance and sing near the altars on which sacrifices for rain were being offered. It is understood from this reference that voluntary supplicants for rain did these things while the Wu were engaged in the rain-ritual, as a means of

joining in the hymns and dances which the professional rain-priests performed.

When rain was superabundant drums were beaten and offerings made on the altars of the spirits of the land (earth ?), in order to avert the evil effect of floods. The rain altars had red silk strings bound around them to restrain the water (whose affinity is Yin) by the red (or Yang) colour of the strings. Nü Kua, the lady who repaired the Universe when it was threatened with chaos, was also invoked in time of flood.

Unusually highly-strung youths of both sexes have been found from time immemorial to be susceptible to the impression that they are being controlled, and it is on record that the practitioners of ecstasy and victims of obsession have often been sickly, and have died young. Further, accusations of imposture and 'black' or malevolent magic are not infrequently laid at the door of Wu, so that the practice of their art is beset by dangers of many kinds.

About 250 B.C. a man of high rank called T'ung was once present at an ancestral sacrifice to the spirits of his stepfather's family. Two well-known female Wu named Tan and Chu were engaged to take part in the service. They were dressed in very bright colours, chanted and danced well, and played expertly on different musical instruments.

They exhibited their power of making themselves invisible at will; swallowed swords; spat out fire; and eventually hid in a cloud, from which came streams of bright, flashing light.

T'ung's stepbrothers were informed by him of these doings and came to see them. They found Tan and Chu dancing and whirling lightly round and round in the central courtyard of the house; the two Wu uttered cries in an unknown tongue (thereby showing symptoms associated with possession), and caused basins to spin and fly about, as modern mediums in



the West have done from time to time. T'ung was by no means edified, and remonstrated with his relatives for having such persons to assist at their family rites ; so Tan and Chu were sent away.

The Wu were often credited with seeing spirits as well as carrying messages from them.

During the third century A.D., a certain Sun of Wu killed the Princess Chu and buried her in a hilly place. When the Emperor Kuei Ming ascended the throne, A.D. 264, he gave orders for her remains to be moved to a more suitable grave. No one could distinguish her resting-place from those around it ; but the officials of the palace remembered how she was dressed when she died. So two Wu were set to watch—at a distance from one another, and without the opportunity of exchanging notes—for an apparition of her soul. After a while both reported, without collusion, that a woman in a blue embroidered head-band, red tunic, white skirt and red silk shoes had appeared out of the hillside, walked half-way up, stopped, and returned to a grave ; near this grave she had stood a while and then vanished. When the grave was opened the princess's body was identified.

There is a romantic anecdote told of Hsiao Wu, Emperor from A.D. 454 to 465. His favourite wife was dead, so he asked a Wu to evoke her spirit. In a few moments her form was seen against a curtain, looking just as she had done in life. The Emperor wished to speak to her, but she was silent, so he hastily advanced to grasp her hand, when she vanished. After this, says the narrative, his grief was deeper than before.

(Presumably the Emperor was warned not to touch the 'ectoplasm' of which the apparition or materialisation was formed.)

A female Wu of South China during the ninth century A.D. is quoted as having made a statement which should be of interest to Western investigators. When sent for by the Prefect Li Hsing, she explained 'that there are two kinds of spirits; those who enjoy happiness and blessings, and others who are poor and mean. The first class have so much Ching Shên, or spiritual vigour and health of the higher kind, that they can of themselves speak with men from time to time; the others, whose Shên, or superior soul, is weak, have to employ me as a medium. The question is, of which kind will be the one we shall meet, *but it is not in my power to know this!*'

The risk of being controlled by a low type of entity, and the use of *mediums* by spirits who are not happy, are as clear as words can make them.

It has also been noticed by readers of Chinese stories about séances, oracles, etc., that no revelations have been made concerning the other world that the medium or his 'clients' could not have found in existing Buddhist or Taoist books.

The effect of suggestion on a melancholy, introspective youth is shown in the following tale of two Cantonese students, Li and Ch'ao, who resided in a lonesome house at Fan Wu Shan. At the festival usually held on the fifteenth of the eighth month, their relatives used to send them wine and food, and the two young fellows made holiday. About midnight on one of these festivals—by which time they were both jolly—they heard a knock at the door, which they answered.

A young man came in and said, 'I'm a student too. I live ten *li* away; but I have heard of you, and have come on purpose to make your acquaintance, and to have the pleasure of your society.'

They invited him to sit down, and the three chatted

for hours about literature and history ; and at last they got on the subject of Taoism and Buddhism. Now Ch'ao, who was a strong Confucianist, disliked the turn of the conversation, but Li, who was of a more imaginative temperament, thoroughly enjoyed it.

'Who has seen Buddha?' interjected Ch'ao.

'Would you like to?' asked the stranger. 'Nothing could be easier.'

Li eagerly approved of the idea, whereupon the stranger climbed on the table, undid his long girdle, passed one end over a beam in the roof, and made a noose at the end of it. Meanwhile a stupefying perfume filled the room.

'Look through this circle,' said the stranger, indicating the noose. Li looked through, and beheld Kuan Yin surrounded by glory; Ch'ao looked through, and saw some hideous creatures with purple faces and protruding tongues. 'You will see better if you put your head in the circle,' suggested the stranger.

Li had just put his head forward when Ch'ao called 'Stop!' and called for help.

The servants rushed in and cut down Li before he was quite strangled; meanwhile, the stranger vanished.

When they heard that the house was haunted the relatives of the two students sent for them, and after that they continued their studies in their own homes.

Li, however, was of a morbid disposition. Although he became, by one examination after another, licentiate, doctor, and then Sub-Prefect of Lu Ch'iang, it happened that he had some unpleasant experience arising out of his official work, whereupon he hanged himself.

The Chinese are fully aware that 'psychics' are abnormally sensitive, and that the subjective element, as we have noticed elsewhere, plays a large part in ghostly experiences.

The Confucian, it will be noted, is credited with a certain amount of common-sense, doubtless owing to his reading books whose very presence in a house is a protection against demons ; and all that he saw was a number of suicide Prêtas tempting his impressionable companion to replace one of them in the realm of torment. Though many examples are quoted of Confucian scholars who are brave and upright, and give no credit to vulgar superstition, the literates as well as the ignorant are usually afraid of offending the spirits, or of attracting ill-luck in any way. There are many stories on record concerning literates who dabbled in spiritualism, as we can see from those now under discussion.

The following is a very Western tale, told by an eleventh-century writer, Shên Kua.

‘ At Shan Yang, Kiang Su province, an uncle of mine once consulted a famous female Wu. She described events happening one thousand miles away, and could read thoughts. Guests engaged in playing draughts would hold in their closed hands groups of white or black draughtsmen *which they had previously counted*, and she always told them correctly how many of each colour they had ; but when they picked up a few at random she could not give the numbers correctly. She only knew what they knew.

She could tell the numbers of things in cloth-covered boxes ; but one day my uncle laid before her a closed box containing the *Vajra-Sûtra* in a hundred books. When he asked her what was inside, she said the box was empty. So he said she was wrong and opened the box, whereupon she replied, “ The box contains *emptiness* in written form. Do you think you can make a fool of me ? ” ’

The *Vajra-Sûtra*, or ‘ Diamond Classic,’ is a Buddhist work emphasizing the emptiness or nothingness

of material things, and is highly prized by Chinese Buddhists as an edifying and even magical work. The quick-witted sophistry of the lady-clairvoyant is not without a touch of humour.

The usual routine of a séance, such as female Wu often hold at the request of Chinese or Manchu women, differs in local colour, but in little else, from similar affairs in the West. Such séances are often held soon after the death of a relative. Sometimes they take place in the main hall of the house, at the family altar, but quite frequently in the women's apartments. Men are apt to be sceptical—even in China—and their presence may prove a bar to manifestations.

Having chosen an auspicious day, the room is sprinkled and swept clean, and all Confucian classics, or such books as may have an exorcising effect on spirits, are removed. Burning incense and dainty sacrificial viands are set out on the altar; or, if the séance is to be in the inner rooms, on a table prepared there for the purpose.

The medium chants in a low voice, bowing from time to time; drums are played or a lute touched, as an accompaniment. After a monotonous droning and drumming, which may last quite a long time, the medium begins to perspire, rocks to and fro, or moves convulsively. Two women at once assist her to a chair, where she falls into a cataleptic sleep, her arms resting on the table. A black veil is cast over her head, and a needle is stuck through her hair, threaded with a piece of cotton which is long enough to reach the floor. (This precaution, which reminds one of 'earthing' a wireless receiver, is intended to prevent the medium from breaking off her revelations too soon.)

When questioned, in the ordinary way of conversation, by her clients, she shivers, fidgets about, and

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mumbles or gabbles in reply, often saying things quite irrelevant to the questions.

Unexpected remarks, invectives, and rebukes are uttered, in no particular order, by the medium; and it is generally recognised that scepticism, insincerity, or lack of concentration on the part of an enquirer may upset or silence the answering 'spirit.'

Suddenly the medium shivers, awakes, and says the spirit has gone: then she asks for her fee and departs.

A sick woman is vividly described in the *Hu Wei*, a book devoted to tales of were-tigers, as unconsciously acting as a 'medium,' and giving messages from her child, who had been eaten by a tiger.

A Buddhist monk tells the story.

In a certain mountain village, a boy of fifteen or sixteen was devoured by a tiger, and his mother became very ill with grief. One day, about nightfall, she suddenly sat up, emitting sad cries in the voice of her dead son. 'Mother,' she cried, 'do not grieve so; it was my destiny.'

'Who are you?' cried the father, very much frightened.

'Do you not recognise your son?' was the reply.

'What proofs can you give?' asked the father.

Then the mother, as if under 'control,' replied, 'I had not the courage to go on brooding any longer over my mother's excessive grief at my loss, so one day, when the Great One was away, I managed to find a chance of consoling her.'

The Great One, says our monk, is the name given to the tiger by its familiar spirit, who does not venture to call it plain 'tiger.'

The father entreated the boy to go on with his story.

'When I was first wounded the pain was terrible, and then the second servant appeared.'

The father asked what this meant, so the child went on :

‘Every new familiar, on arriving, has to take over from the familiar whom its arrival sets free a large net, which is very heavy. We use this net to catch men, whom the Great One eats. None of the people in this district who have been eaten by tigers have escaped the net ; they have all been familiar spirits to tigers. . . .

‘No coffins should be used for persons killed but left uneaten by tigers ; their remains should be burned.

‘At present So-and-So and So-and-So are with me,’ said the ‘controlled’ woman. ‘They are anxious to interview their relations. Please send for them.’

Then the father went round the village, and some fifty persons who had had kinsmen eaten by tigers were gathered together. To each of these the mother spoke in the voice of his dead relative, talking in this way for a whole day at a stretch ; but at nightfall she was her natural self again. From that date she recovered from her illness, and felt no evil effects subsequently.

Another curious case of obsession is said to have occurred, A.D. 1763, in the family of the District Magistrate, Wang Hsien Shên, in the province of Hu Peh.

A year previously, during the summer heat, the magistrate’s younger brother, Wang Yen Chêng, had died ; and in the autumn of the following year Wang Hsi, a cousin of the dead man, became seriously ill.

He was delirious for days, and a doctor was called in to prescribe for him. Just as his mother placed the medicine on the table beside his bed, Wang Hsi said in a strange voice, ‘I have been the victim of a fool of a doctor. I don’t want my cousin Hsi to be treated

in the same way,' and, with a wave of his hand, he spilt the medicine on the floor.

'Who are you?' cried his mother in dismay.

'I am Yen Chêng, who died last year. Do you not know my voice?'

'What has happened to you?' said the mother.

'On account of the uprightness of my character, and because I was cut off before my appointed time, I have been attached to the staff of the City God of Ch'ang Chou, with the rank of prefect. I have to pass through this place on important business, and have taken the opportunity to save my cousin Hsi from the incompetence of a quack. I must now proceed on my official journey. I shall return in due course.'

Then the patient fell into a peaceful sleep, and the following morning he remembered nothing of the events of the previous day. Towards nightfall Yen Chêng again spoke through the mouth of his cousin Hsi, and said he was thirsty. Drink was given him, and then he asked to see his favourite brother P'ah. When P'ah came, Yen Chêng (in the body of Hsi) caressed him and said: 'Take care, in your play, not to risk your life. The other day, when you were sailing your toy-boats in the pond in front of our ancestral temple, you were very nearly killed by the fall of a pillar. While it was falling I pushed it, and it swerved aside, otherwise you would have been crushed to death. Father has offended the ghost of a man whose tomb he levelled in order to dig the pond and erect the pillar. I have averted the dead man's vengeance this time; but you must see that there is no delay in having his body exhumed and buried elsewhere.' Then Yen Chêng asked to see his three sisters. To the two elder ones he promised happiness; but he told the third that fate was against her, and suggested that she would do well to join him and



their mother. Then Yen Chêng smiled, saluted, and took leave of them.

Hsi at once recovered his senses, and was cured in a few days. The third sister died less than six months after.

In the winter of 1764 Yen Chêng appeared in a dream to his cousin Hsi and said, 'I am happy to see you in such good health. I am going to be promoted, and shall find it difficult to visit you again. Good-bye.'

A very early account of a successful materialisation is extant, the medium being a certain T'ang Pao Hêng. This man had known the famous magician Chang Tao Ling (born A.D. 34), who was believed to be descended from Chang Liang, one of the greatest of the Taoist Hsien. T'ang had learnt from the master-wizard a potent spell for controlling both Shên and Kuei.

One day T'ang said to a friend, 'Passing near the posting-house on the high road, I saw two ladies get out of a carriage. They were both unveiled, and the second was very pretty. I shall come to your house to-night, and we shall both meet the lady there.'

'But,' replied his friend, 'how can she come? Her people are of high rank, and there's bound to be trouble.'

'I shall call her soul and it will come,' said T'ang. 'No one will be any the worse. But it must be at night, while she is asleep; and, whatever happens, *do not touch what you see*, or she may not return to her body, and death will ensue.'

So the next night T'ang stationed himself outside the posting-house, breathed and swallowed his breath, and tied a red thread to the middle finger of his hand. Then he re-entered his friend's apartment, sent for some wine, and told the servants to go to bed.

Late in the night he went to the door and opened

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it. The transparent form of a girl floated into the room and addressed them in a thin, weak voice.

‘Who are you?’ said T’ang.

‘I am the wife of an official,’ she replied. ‘My husband has left a provincial post to take up a position in the capital. I am to join him there. But where am I now? I remember going to bed. Am I dreaming? Am I alive or dead?’

‘Do not fear,’ said T’ang. ‘You are still alive, and no harm will come to you.’

The three chatted until dawn, and then T’ang released the girl’s soul and sent it back to its body.

(The tying and knotting of threads are part of the hocus-pocus of wizards in the folk-tales of many lands. The knot of Gordius, the ‘Gordian’ or Kurdish king occurs in a well-known Greek fable; the Gordian, being an Eastern foreigner, was no doubt held to be a wizard.)

The prohibition to touch ‘ectoplasm’ for fear of injuring the real body of the dormant medium or other ‘subject’ is in harmony with the ideas of Western spiritualists.

In another tale, in which an ardent spiritualist was in the habit of calling up the ghost of a notorious sorceress, his planchette one day wrote in large characters, ‘I am Wei T’o (Vihârapâla), Protector of the Law of Buddha. Do you not know that the Sovereign Deity of Heaven hates nothing so much as these communications between the living and the dead? Give them up at once, repent sincerely, and have nothing more to do with this she-devil.’ The operator was very frightened, and at once renounced spiritualism.

(Here we have a ‘Buddhist’ spirit quoting the message of a Personal God; a truly Chinese synthesis of antagonistic doctrines.)

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

A case of 'telepathy' is quoted of Tsêng Ts'an (born 506 B.C.), the famous disciple of Confucius.

As a boy he was away from home, gathering firewood in the hills, when his mother suddenly required his presence. Since he was too far off to hear her call, she bit her finger, and at once a sympathetic pain in his finger warned him, and he returned home without delay.

A remarkable example of obsession is related by a man of letters named Kùeh, whose father lost his principal wife, and placed his secondary wife, Li, at the head of the household in her place.

Three days after her promotion, the lady Li was going through the wardrobe of the late wife, and took a fancy to a red dress with nine lotus flowers embroidered on it. She put it on, and wore it at dinner. That evening, after dinner, a kind of fit seized her, and she cried out, 'I am Chou (the name of her predecessor). This red dress was part of my wedding trousseau, and I never wore it for fear of dirtying it. How do you dare to wear it, you usurper? I will drag your soul out of your body!'

The family at once knelt before the angry spirit of Chou, and begged it to have mercy on the young woman Li. 'You are dead,' they said. 'What use is the red dress to you?'

'Give it back to me at once or burn it!' cried the soul of Chou. 'Do you not know how jealous I was? Have I ever given Li any of my clothes? Burn the dress at once, or I shall not go away!'

Nothing else would do, so the dress was burned forthwith.

'Ah, now I have it!' cried the ghost. 'Thank you; I'm going.'

Li at once came to herself, and was as well as ever.

Next morning, however, the soul of Chou again possessed Li, and demanded to speak to the master of

the house. 'Your new wife is too young,' she said to him. 'I shall continue to superintend household matters every morning ;' and for six months the ghost of Chou, through the mouth of Li, held interviews, went over the accounts, hired and dismissed servants, and so forth.

By degrees everyone got used to the arrangement, but one day the ghost said to her former husband, 'I am now going away. I want you to bury my coffin, as the constant passage of people through the house hurts my bones, and my soul wants to rest in peace.'

(The burial had been postponed, as often happens in China, until a lucky day and an auspicious site for the tomb had been fixed by the soothsayers. The coffin was still above ground, in the house of the widower.)

When the matter was explained to her, the ghost of Chou replied—speaking, of course, through Li, the second wife—'Your neighbour on the west, the dealer in fireworks, has a plot of ground that will suit me admirably. I have been there. It is in a valley, shaded with cypress and bamboos (both trees of good omen). He asks sixty dollars for it, but he will take thirty-six. Buy it at once.'

Everything happened just as the ghost had said, but still she was anxious to hurry on the burial. 'You must give me time to notify our relations,' said the widower. 'Besides, I have no son to sacrifice for you.'

The funeral had to be delayed until a baby boy was born to the second wife, Li, and when the customary rituals had been performed—the unconscious son being present as chief mourner for his father's principal wife, nominal 'mother' of the children of any subsidiary spouse—the ghost of Chou announced that now she could rest in peace, and poor Madam Li was no longer obsessed or troubled in any way.

The next story deals with the personation of one 'spirit' by another, and reveals more of the popular Chinese notions concerning the life after death than many a lengthy treatise.

At Li Yang, Kiang Su, a certain Ma kept a school. He lodged with a man called Li, whose neighbour, Wang, beat his wife and did not give her enough to eat. One day the poor woman caught a fowl belonging to Li, cooked and ate it. Li made a complaint to the brutal Wang, who was drunk at the time; so the fellow seized a sword and swore he would kill his wife.

'I did not steal the fowl,' cried the woman, mad with fear. 'It was the schoolmaster, Ma!'

Ma denied it, but still she stuck to her story. 'Very well,' said Ma, 'let us go to the temple of Kuan Ti and cast lots.'

Kuan Ti, a soldier deified by Imperial decree, is much honoured by all classes; hardly a village exists without a temple or a statue of the bluff hero. (A note on this popular cult appears in another chapter.)

'Let us cast lots,' said Ma. 'If the diagram turns out to be Yin (negative), the fowl was stolen by your wife; if it is Yang (positive), the thief was a man.'

Thrice the lot was cast, and thrice a Yang diagram resulted. Wang sheathed his sword and released his wife, but Ma was so disgraced in the eyes of the neighbours that he 'lost face,' and had to close his school.

The sequel was striking.

Some years later Ma was at a spiritualistic séance, and the spirit claimed to be Kuan Ti. 'Oh, it's you, is it, you fool!' cried Ma, breaking into a torrent of imprecations. 'It's your fault that I have been unjustly branded as a thief!'

The pencil then began moving, and traced in the ashes the following: 'Ma, you will soon be a magistrate. I wanted to teach you to value human life.'

You have lost a school ; Mrs. Wang would have lost her life if I had told the truth. I do not care if you have reviled me ; the Lord of Heaven has praised me and raised my rank three grades.'

'Liar !' said Ma. 'Kuan Ti has the rank of an emperor. How can he be promoted ?'

The planchette replied, 'The true Kuan Ti has an emperor's rank, but he does not dwell in the numberless temples erected in his honour. He is in heaven, near the Supreme Deity. A Kuei of good character, deputed by God, takes his place in each temple. It is I who accept offerings and answer prayers locally on his behalf. It is in this way that I have obtained promotion.'

Ma was unable to reply.

The foregoing matter-of-fact explanation of popular polytheism is most important. It reveals a belief in one God which sees nothing incongruous in subsidiary gods who are not only worshipped for themselves, but who can in turn employ inferior spirits to share their responsibilities and some of their honours, and even to descend to subterfuges in their service. There is no hint whatever of asking Kuan Ti or any of his 'staff' to intercede with the Supreme God on behalf of the human petitioner ; no hint of the sharp distinction between the Deity and the 'saints'—however exalted their powers and virtues—drawn by believers in dogmatic Christianity. The difference between the Chinese God and other gods is one of degree, not of kind.

Here is another story of spirit-personation in the same prosaic vein.

There once lived in a village in Kiang Su an assiduous spiritualist called Hua Hsie Kuan, who had a circle of friends of the same way of thinking. One of the spirits evoked by them gave its name as Wang

Chung Shan, a doctor of literature of the Ming Period (A.D. 1368-1644).

Hua and his friends greeted the ghost in accordance with his rank, and asked him some appropriate questions. They noticed that he expressed himself with difficulty and was not good at verse-making. He was also very humble and obliging, and always replied as soon as he was asked. One day, in the very middle of a conversation, the pencil wrote, 'Excuse me, I must go. Ch'ien Ju Lin has invited me to dinner.' Then the writing stopped.

Now Ch'ien Ju Lin lived some three *li* away only, so the worthy Hua enquired what had been going on at his house that day. It appeared that Ch'ien and his family had been making invocations and offerings to the Shên, or good spirits, on behalf of a sick person. The next day, therefore, Hua called up Wang's spirit and asked, 'Did you dine with Ch'ien yesterday?'

'Yes,' replied the spirit, 'and I was very well entertained.'

'But,' said Hua, 'Ch'ien only invited such Shên as the Local Guardian Spirit and others of similar rank; did a spirit so distinguished as yourself sit down with them?'

Then the spirit confessed that it was not that of Dr. Wang, but of a Cantonese cotton-dealer, Li Pai Mien, who had died in the district during the reign of K'ang Hsi (1662-1723). 'My soul,' he explained, 'was not led homewards, and lately I have been lodging with some other souls in a little shrine on the bridge. We are a company of thirteen forgotten ghosts; and, having no crimes on our consciences, we are not confined or hampered in any way. If any offerings are made in the village we taste them.'

'But you cannot appropriate an offering made to the Local Guardian Spirits,' objected Hua.

'These guardians do not visit houses,' replied the

ghost of Li. 'They take what is offered in the temples, but offerings made in houses come to neglected Kuei, such as we.'

'And is that permitted by Heaven?' asked Hua.

'Yes, so long as we do not extort offerings by force. I have tasted your tea and your wine, but I have not deprived you of any of it.'

'Then why did you pretend to be Wang Chung Shan?' said Hua.

'When you performed your invocations,' replied Li's spirit, 'the guardian spirit of your house, who is not of high rank, could not approach a spirit of any importance, so he invited us, the thirteen forgotten ghosts of the shrine on the bridge. The other twelve are illiterate, and were afraid to come. I can write a little, so I risked it. To be sure of a hearty welcome, I personated Wang Chung Shan, whose name I have noticed on a good number of inscriptions in the district.'

'As you are unrestricted, why have you not gone home?'

'I have no money to pay the spirits of the bridges, ferries and gates,' replied the ghost.

'If I burn a hundred cash in paper money, will that be any good to you?'

'A thousand thanks! But I shall want a little more to give to the bridge-spirit. I have been his guest for a long time, and we ought to part good friends.'

Hua burned the requisite quantity of paper money and dismissed the ghost of Li; but, disgusted at the deceit of the thing, he gave up spiritualism.

The utterly prosaic treatment of this ghost-tale is almost funny. The way in which the spirits are classified by rank; their respect for letters; the complaisance of the higher spirits in allowing lower ones to make what they can in the way of small 'pickings,'



as long as they do not cause trouble by any violent act : every detail shows how utterly the other world is assumed, in popular belief, to be a humdrum replica of the present.

These examples of the personation of one spirit by another agree closely with what we are told of Western spiritualism ; and the sarcastic remarks about the learned Wang's difficulty in writing and his inability to turn out a good poem are not at all surprising when we remember that no one ever seems, in Europe or America, to learn from the planchette or the table-rapper anything that has not already been said or written—often in better language—by ordinary human agency.

The ghost of the Cantonese in this story is prevented by trifling obstacles from reaching the burial-place of its clan ; obstacles which reveal a fundamental difference from our conception of the spirit's freedom from material limits and restrictions.

In the Chinese popular tales, quoted in previous chapters, spirits are defeated in battle, and even killed, by mere mortals ; and in their séances we see that the entities who reply through the planchette or the obsessed medium frequently figure as paltry knaves, at best. Even mere 'foreign devils'—living savage aliens—are often far worthier of fear and respect.

Another description of prosaic 'life' in the world to come is set down concerning the licentiate Lo, who went to Peking in 1751 to undergo his examination for the degree of doctor.

A man named Li called upon him and said, 'You will pass, but you will not get an appointment' (in the Government service, to which the degrees were, of course, the only means of access).

'Tell me why,' said Lo.

‘After the pass-list is published I’ll tell you,’ replied Li.

In due course Lo’s name appeared, but although he took his degree no appointment was offered him. He went and found Li and questioned him.

‘I have had a dream about you,’ said Li. ‘Your destiny will take you to P’u Ch’êng Hsien, and I came to Peking on purpose to let you know.’

Dr. Lo went home. Expecting to be sent to P’u Ch’êng Hsien, he made enquiries about the sub-prefect of the place; and, on hearing that that officer had still some years to serve there, Lo opened a school. He told everybody he was not likely to be teaching for long, as he was expecting to be summoned to his official duties at P’u Ch’êng Hsien.

Three years later Dr. Lo died suddenly in his school. In the following autumn, as his relatives were evoking spirits with the planchette, the pencil suddenly began to write in very large characters, ‘I am Lo, and I have come to visit you.’

The relatives expressed doubt, so the pencil wrote, ‘Do not doubt. To prove who I am, I tell you that your title to your land at Lo She Wan is defective. You are at law with your neighbours about it. I was looking over the title the day I died, and left the deed in my copy of the *Li Chi*, at page so-and-so.’

Sure enough, when they went to the library, there was the deed as revealed through the planchette. The family all knelt down and wept for the deceased. The pencil went on, ‘At the time of my death I was expecting to be appointed a mandarin at P’u Ch’êng Hsien. I had forgotten to ask whether I was to be an official here on earth or in the underworld; but as soon as I died I was made a Guardian Spirit of that place. The prediction has therefore been fulfilled. If I do not come again soon, you must understand that mandarins in the underworld are worked very

hard, much harder than on earth. They have only one holiday a year, the fifteenth of the eighth month (to-day). To-night there is a full moon and no wind, and I have taken advantage of my leave to pay you all a visit. On such and such a day, I may perhaps be able to come again. During my visits do not disturb the trees and shrubs in the courtyard; they shelter the Kuei who escort me. These Kuei are so light that the least breath of wind carries them away. When they want to remain still they have to attach themselves to something steady. As a good mandarin, I must consider the welfare of my staff.'

After a little more conversation of no special import, the pencil wrote a few words of farewell, and the manifestations ceased.

The curious ideas revealed about the lightness of Kuei have been mentioned in an earlier chapter. More notable, however, are the vague promises of promotion, and the 'unspiritual' character of the communication through the planchette. The whole thing might have happened in London or Boston.

In our next example we have a bogus medium and his confederate—rascals of a type not unknown to European spiritualists—who swindle a sordid villain of his ill-gotten money.

The father of Wu San Fu, of Su Chou, was an old miser. He had amassed some hundred thousand strings of cash, a considerable portion of which he held on behalf of his partners.

One day he said to his son, San Fu, 'My partners hold no receipt for the money in my hands; and, if I were to die, there is nothing to prevent your keeping all of it. I am going to hang myself.'

San Fu made no protest. The miser hanged himself; his son did not cut him down, did not acknowledge the claims of any of the partners, and kept all the money.

Meanwhile, a certain Ku Hsin I, who knew nothing of the debts to the partners, but was quite aware that San Fu had not stirred a finger to prevent his father hanging himself, determined to get possession of some of the money. He therefore arranged, with a 'ne'er-do-weel' accomplice, to hold a séance, and invited San Fu. The latter wrote out a request, and burned it in the usual manner, whereupon the planchette pencil wrote in large characters, 'San Fu, I am your father. When I decided to hang myself, you said nothing to dissuade me. When I took my life, you did nothing to rescue me. For these grave faults you will pay dearly in the next world unless you hand to Ku Hsin I thirty thousand strings of cash at once, that he may hold an expiatory sacrifice for the good of my soul. If you do as I tell you, my soul will be at rest and you will be absolved of your guilt.'

San Fu quite believed that his father's spirit had sent the message, and paid the money to Ku, receiving a proper acknowledgment in writing from the latter. Ku, of course, protested that it was far too much money for the purpose, but was at length persuaded to take it.

They then began to drink, and as soon as San Fu was quite drunk Ku stole the receipt and burned it. San Fu was unable to find it the next day, and accused Ku of making away with it.

'As you have paid me nothing,' said Ku, 'why should I have given you a receipt?'

San Fu saw that he had been tricked, but as he was fairly well off at the time, he swallowed his chagrin and let it pass. Later on, however, being in need of money, he approached Ku, who had invested the thirty thousand strings of cash and made a good profit on the transaction.

Ku felt a certain compassion for San Fu, and would have let him have three thousand strings, but his uncle objected, saying, 'If you do that, you will be acknow-

ledging that you have robbed San Fu. Don't give him a cent, or he will have a handle against you.'

Ku followed his uncle's advice and refused his help. San Fu went to the mandarin, but he had no written evidence, so nothing could be done.

In despair he wrote an accusation against Ku Hsin I and burnt it in the temple of the City Guardian. Three days after that he died suddenly ; and, three days later still, Ku and his uncle also died suddenly. On the night of their deaths the neighbours saw the lanes and alleys of the town filled with the attendants of the Guardian Spirit, carrying lanterns, who had come to seize the souls of Ku and his uncle.

This affair happened in the fourth month of the year 1764.

Another tale of the same period deals with Li Wu Hung, who took his doctor's degree in 1766, and had been an ardent spiritualist in his youth.

Years before, the planchette pencil had written, 'Honour me and I will help you.' Li prostrated himself, and made libations and offerings. From that day onwards, the planchette told him all he required to know, and helped his advancement ; and he honoured the Shên all the more. The spirit used even to revise his essays for him, until one day an eminent critic said his style was that of Ch'ien Hsi, a celebrated scholar of the Ming Period.

'Are you Ch'ien Hsi ?' asked Li of the planchette.

'Yes,' was the reply ; and from that day onwards Li, and any of his friends for whom he consulted the planchette, called him 'The Master Ch'ien.' The pencil, however, never signed any communication with that name ; and when the spirit spoke of itself, it called itself *a dweller in the dark place*. Wherever Li went on official duty, the spirit was available for consultation ; but one day, when Li was out, his son

insulted the spirit. It wrote a letter in farewell, and Li was never able to evoke it again.

A Mr. Wu Chuh Ping, of Yang Chou, was sitting for the licentiate's examination at Nanking in the autumn of 1747. He consulted the planchette, which wrote the four words, 'Hsü Pu Ch'an Kung.' Wu read these to mean, 'With dignity he enters the palace of the moon.' From this, Wu gathered that he would obtain his degree; but when the list of successful candidates was issued, his name was not to be seen. The first on the list of graduates, however, was a man called 'Hsü Pu Ch'an,' with the honorific 'kung,' written with a different character, at the end; as it were, 'My Lord Hsü Pu Ch'an.'

The 'spirits' are as well known for trickery in China as elsewhere. This last tale reminds one of the prophecy which dulled the conscience of Macbeth—'Till Birnam wood do come to Dunsinane'—and eventually led to his ruin.

The sceptic Wang Ch'ung (died A.D. 90) sneers at the claims of Wu who profess to call up the souls of the dead by their mummeries, and to make them speak through the mouths of the 'mediums.' What they say, says he, must be falsehood. If a sick man is delirious or unintelligible in his speech, how much less can one expect coherence from a dead man?

We have seen, in a former chapter, what a thorough-going materialist Wang Ch'ung was; but in fairness to him, we must admit that Wu, as a class, are suspect. Their 'revelations' are often trivial, vulgar, or untruthful; they are frequently accused of fraud, blackmail, and evil magic, and they have even at times been the prime movers in riots and rebellions. When caught transgressing they can expect no sympathy from anyone—and they rarely deserve it.

Probably on account of the development and official

recognition of Confucianism, and the degeneration of the Taoist priesthood into a horde of charm-dealers and quacks, the Wu, formerly animistic priests of primitive nature-worship, have by degrees lost their right of attending and functioning at the official sacrifices. They are still feared, but are hardly ever respected.

Our final example shows how the vengeance of the unseen world fell upon a man who habitually practised the worst sacrilege known to the average Chinese—the violation and plundering of tombs.

A certain Chu, of Hang Chou, made a regular business of robbing graves. He and his six or seven comrades used to sally forth on dark nights, breaking open tombs with their picks.

The gang found more bones than loot, and at last tried spiritualism, hoping thereby to be guided to rich graves. One day a spirit calling itself Yao Wang wrote, 'If you remain at this job, which is worse than brigandage, you will all be decapitated.' The thieves were terrified, and for a whole year refrained from their sacrilegious practices. Then, feeling the pinch of hunger, they again had recourse to the planchette. A spirit calling itself the Shên of Hsi Hu (The Western Lake) wrote, 'Near the Pao Chu T'a (a Buddhist Stûpa or pagoda covering a buried relic) you will find a well of hewn stone. It leads to the tomb of a great personage, in which there is treasure.'

The following night Chu and his gang took their picks and made for the Stûpa. On arriving they heard a voice say, 'Under the willows, on the west of the Stûpa.' Sure enough, there they found the mouth of a filled-up well, which they had to re-open. About four feet down they came to a huge flagstone; this they speedily cleared, but could not lift, as it was too heavy. Then one of them remembered that a certain

Buddhist monk of the Ch'ing Ssü Monastery knew a spell which could enable one to lift the heaviest stones ; so they sent for the monk, and promised him a share of the plunder.

The monk, who was also a rascal, accepted, and came and repeated his spell a hundred times before the stone. Suddenly the flagstone lifted, and a long black arm emerged and dragged the monk down into the tomb. There a vampire tore him to shreds and devoured him, only leaving his bones.

Next day the tomb was found to have closed again of itself. The monk was missed, and on enquiry it transpired that he had gone off with Chu ; so the latter was arrested, and his house searched. He hanged himself in prison to escape the executioner's sword.

The Chinese laws against opening or looting tombs, or interfering with the dead, are exceedingly severe. They distinguish several grades of guilt, and even forbid the mutilation of the corpse of a criminal who has been executed.

A European lady interested in spiritualism and sorcery once informed the writer that one's ' psychic forces ' are conserved by clasping one hand in another ; and it is somewhat curious to find this very device practised in China by persons who are alone in the dark, and are afraid of spectres. My informant was quite unaware, at the time, of the Chinese belief on the subject.

In conclusion it may be noted that we find in Chinese spiritualism the usual disquieting element of deception—not always involuntary ; hysteria and other nervous troubles ; commonplace ' revelations ' ; and a residuum hard to account for unless we admit that there is contact with agencies other than human, but wholly evil.

And there we must leave it.



## CONCLUDING REMARKS

THE patient reader will now turn to his humble servant and remark, 'To what does all this tend? What do I learn from this fearsome beadroll of devils and monsters, of ghosts, vampires, and "things that go bump in the night"?'

The object of the foregoing sketch, as of other books of ghost-stories, is to interest and entertain those who care for such things; but it is also an aim of the compiler to show, wherever possible, that the minds of the numerous, but much abused and misjudged people of China differ in no important respect from those of other races in the face of happenings which they do not understand. The Mediterranean peoples may truly and fairly boast of their ancient and original civilization, which has spread over the major part of the earth. Many of the writers, however, who glory in this not only do their best to belittle the culture of Eastern Asia—solely because it has not been proved to be of Mediterranean origin—but they go so far as to write of the East Asian as if he were a glaring anomaly, a bewildering exception to our generally received notions of humanity.

It is in the hope of fighting—to the best of my power—against this narrow, unjust and unscientific attitude that I have ventured beyond the limits of folklore into the region of anthropology, and have insisted, in season and out of season, upon the unity of the human race.

It is also my aim to emphasize the importance of appreciating the substratum of truth—however attenu-

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ated or disfigured—that lies at the base of beliefs which at first sight are merely foolish or repulsive. It has been wisely remarked that ‘fiction is true, except for the names and dates’; similarly, it may be said that—with due reservations—folk-lore is ‘true,’ because it is evidence of what has really happened in the minds of men, given the necessary stimuli and absence of scientific knowledge.

Here we may recall the statement, which we owe to Sir Lawrence Gomme in his *Folk-lore as an Historical Science*, that the great bulk of folk-lore owes its existence to

*Animism*, the theory that all life is one and all things are alive;

*Magic*, which seeks to alter or reverse the laws of nature by mimicry or other ritual;

*Totemism*, or animal-worship as a tribal distinction;

*Contact* of alien races and unequal cultures, with resulting inaccuracy of observation and garbled history; and, most important of all,

The views on *Sleep* and *Dreams* (especially dreams of the dead or the absent) held by so many unscientific peoples.

On the subjects of *Animism* and *Magic* the tales here collected may be left to speak for themselves. In legends which libel or caricature *foreigners* the Chinese are particularly rich; a fact which reminds us that for a lengthy period the nucleus of what is now China was the civilizing centre of a vast region peopled by tribes of inferior culture, and that the Chinese had no means of communicating (so far as one can discover) with any states except those on a manifestly lower plane than their own.

In my views on *Totemism* I am prepared for criticism. Perhaps I have tried to prove too much; perhaps I am unduly inclined to accept an easy, obvious, and inoffensive solution to the dark mystery

of the 'were-animal' myth. So be it. Maybe there is no single, comprehensive solution ; but if there be, and if this compilation should in any way help to encourage search for it, my purpose will have been more than served.

In any event, there must remain an element of mystery in the working of the human mind, and in the tales told about it. After allowing the widest possible scope to the five chief sources of folk-lore just mentioned ; after granting all that we can to prejudice, fear, inaccuracy, and ignorance of physical science ; after allotting its due share to every religion that bears upon our subject, we are still confronted with a residuum, in all quarters of the globe, of belief in phenomena for which at present no physical or psychological explanation can be put forward. This residuum, if it points to anything, points to the influence of intelligences other than human, and to powers exercised by them in a manner not only useless, but actually mischievous to mankind. The position of the borderline between the manifestation of these influences, and the natural sources of folk-lore which I have so heavily underlined, is a matter of evidence ; and evidence of a reliable character is not easily to be had.

We Europeans are just beginning to learn that we know nothing of the constitution of matter. Can we set a limit to the phenomena of mind ? Can we assume that matter, as we know it on this planet, and mind as we theorize about it on this planet, exhaust the possibilities of the Universe ?

And now just two words on the aims of those investigators who are best represented by the author of *The Golden Bough*.

The wonderful progress of physical science during the Victorian period coincided with a wave of materialism of a deadly and far-reaching nature. The views of the Universe into which the nineteenth-cen-

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tury scientists most easily fell were imagined to be incompatible with belief in any Deity other than blind, soulless necessity. The 'survival of the fittest,' for example, is now a catch-word in the mouths of the thoughtless; from an hypothesis put forward by a narrow-minded but honest unbeliever it has become a 'law of Karma' of an utterly immoral kind—a far lower and viler thing than the retributive machinery of Buddhism.

Therefore, without in any way disparaging the vast work done by the folklorists of that school, we are driven to consider their outlook unduly pessimistic, even for the period in which they wrote.

It is going too far to regard every religious belief or tradition as a regrettable relic of the age of magic, or as evidence of ignorance, superstition, or barbarism.

A later and saner view is to accept a folk-tale—so far as it bears on religion—as a '*deposed* religious myth,' and therefore as something on an entirely different footing from the living beliefs and practices to which we owe the highest and best things in Christianity and in the other great cults of the world. It is not within the province of the folklorist to attack or belittle these in any way.

The history of alchemy or of astrology is not a veiled sneer at modern science; and there is no reason why a tale about a devil should turn anyone's mind away from God.

## APPENDIX

### NAMES

IN all Eastern countries, the name is more than a mere label distinguishing one individual from another. In China, particularly, the name is a very serious matter. Children are usually known during infancy by what we should call a nick-name, and the less elegant it is, the less risk is there of any evil spirit showing jealousy of the child, or of its parent, or of hearing the true name of the little one and acquiring more power to harm it. 'Little Pig,' 'Little Dog,' 'Sand,' 'Ugly Snout,' and even coarser epithets are used by loving and anxious parents as a precaution.

Sometimes little boys—whose survival for the purpose of ancestral worship is so much desired—are given female names; partly to conceal their identity, and probably, also, because girls are not so delicate in early infancy as boys.

(There are no reliable statistics of infant mortality in China, but the superior vitality of females has been demonstrated wherever proper mortality tables are available.)

The 'fate-name' of the child, especially if it be a boy, is of honourable and auspicious import, such expressions as 'Obedience and Uprightness,' 'Benevolent Modesty,' 'Progressive Prosperity' being frequently used for this purpose. The 'fate-name' is hardly ever pronounced, but it is the child's chief name, apart from his clan or family name. When he goes to school, he takes a 'study-name'; when he sits for his degree, he uses an 'examination-name'; and this, if he passes, becomes his 'graduation-name.' As a Government functionary, the name under which he passes continues in use as his 'official name,' and is used by him and others in correspondence and in State papers.

At marriage he takes his designation or 'manhood-name,' emblematic of his maturity and virile dignity; but this custom is to some extent confined to educated people.

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After his death his posthumous name is either his 'designation,' or an honorary name conferred after death; in the latter event—as it is not usual to give a posthumous name to anyone who has not made some stir in the world of letters or in official life—the process can almost be compared to 'canonisation.'

The real point of the whole system is this. Through fear of wizards and evil spirits, identity is concealed by every possible means. European fairy tales show many examples of elves and others who are powerless as soon as their true names are known to mortals. In the Finnish *Kalevala* a malevolent thing of any kind is checkmated by a wizard pronouncing its true name and chanting the history of its origin. How true it is that the glamour of anything wonderful is torn away when its essence is laid bare in cold daylight, and the cause and meaning of it are manifest to all!

We can see, also, how affectionate nick-names were originally safeguards of those beloved—particularly during the dangerous years of infancy; how it came to be held disrespectful to kings and chiefs, and even more to gods, for their true appellations to be bandied about in conversation; how pronouns of the second person were gradually differentiated, displaced, and in certain cases, dropped out of use, owing to superstitious consideration for the welfare or dignity of the person addressed.

The comparatively free use of surnames is to be accounted for by the fact that a crowd is held to be less liable to injury from evil magic than an individual, as we have noticed elsewhere. Even among European men, especially in English-speaking places, people address their friends by their surnames, and only those with whom they are intimate by their nicknames.

There are several Chinese traditions bearing upon surnames which are interesting.

One is that, at some unknown early date, experts in the five tones fixed the surnames of the people—how, no man can say; another, that they received them from Heaven.

A different legend has it that some accident of birth was the cause of a particular surname being allotted to a man, just as in Europe, many centuries later, a knight received a name from an adventure achieved, or a device depicted upon his shield.

## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

Ordinary surnames and clan-surnames seem to have been distinguished in ancient China, as among the Romans. The expression 'grandfather,' as the person from whom the clan-surname was inherited, appears to have been used somewhat loosely, to mean 'ancestor.'

The Hunnish and Turkish peoples, it was noticed, had no surnames, and this is largely true down to modern times.

The term 'hundred surnames' should not be read literally. 'Hundred' means 'numerous'; the commonly used surnames in China run to about four hundred.

Marriages between persons of the same surname are avoided whenever it is possible. The objection to consanguineous unions is very widely spread, and Totems and other tribal distinctions can hardly be unconnected with the social and hygienic objections to the intermarriage of persons closely related. In English folk-lore there is a rhyme decrying the marriage of people whose names even begin with the same letter :

'Change your name, and not your letter,  
'Change for worse, and not for better.'

### THE CHIEF EPOCHS OF CHINESE TRADITION AND HISTORY

Period of Myth and Legend: dates usually assumed  
2852 B.C. to 2205 B.C..

Heroic Founders of Civilisation: Fu Hsi, Shên Nung,  
Huang Ti, Yao and Shun.

Hsia Dynasty: 2205-1766 B.C. The Great Yü, the flood-  
queller, and other less famous rulers.

Shang Dynasty: 1766-1122 B.C. Began with T'ang the  
Completer, a heroic figure; ended with the evil  
tyrant, Chou Hsin. The dynastic title was changed  
to Yin in 1401 B.C.

Chou Dynasty: 1122-255 B.C. Largely historical. First  
Emperor, the Great Wu, a statesman much celebrated  
in the Classics. His younger brother, the Duke of  
Chou, is revered as one of China's greatest men, and  
Confucius refers to him frequently in his teachings.

A period of strife between the feudal princes fol-  
lowed, during which Lao Tzū, Confucius, and Mencius

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endeavoured by their teachings to restore the moral sense of the rulers. The short-lived Ch'in Dynasty (255-206 B.C.) is best known as the period of Shih Huang Ti (accession 221 B.C.), who burned all books except a few on agriculture and divination, and restored and unified, in the Great Wall, a frontier-defence against the Hsiung-Nu or Huns.

The Han Dynasty, 206 B.C.-A.D. 221 was marked by a revival of classical learning and a general advance in culture.

The epoch of the Three Kingdoms was one of Civil War, invasion and turmoil ; various heroes came into prominence, of whom romantic and marvellous tales are told. A.D. 221 to 277.

Other ill-starred and ephemeral royal houses rose and fell, until, in A.D. 618, Kao Tsu, the first T'ang Emperor, ascended the throne.

Poetry, art, and letters ; Buddhist fervour, Taoist magic, and Confucian opposition to ' strange doctrine ' all had their exponents during the three hundred years of the T'ang period. Writers on ghosts and spirits seem to have been particularly prolific in those days.

Another period of unstable dynasties (five in number) followed, and the Sung Dynasty opened with T'ai Tsu, A.D. 960.

Art and philosophy flourished exceedingly ; the Confucian Classics were carefully studied by the sage Chu Hsi and his school, and their exposition of the ethics and cosmogony of Confucius was accepted as the only genuine and orthodox interpretation of the sacred books.

In A.D. 1127 Tartar invasions encroached upon and overran the Northern part of the Empire of the Sung, leaving them the southern part ; and by degrees the Yüan or Mongol Dynasty took command of a considerable portion of China.

Kublai Khan (accession A.D. 1280), the first Yüan Emperor to reign over the whole country, is the most famous of these. Marco Polo, the celebrated traveller, resided in China at this time. Excellent pottery was produced.

In 1368 the Yüans were expelled, and the Ming Dynasty was founded by a Buddhist ex-monk of humble rank. Under Yung Lo, (accession 1403), China was the pre-



## CHINESE GHOULS AND GOBLINS

dominant power in Eastern, South-Eastern and Central Asia.

The arts, particulars in the matter of ceramics, were on a very high level; literature, however, showed itself richer in reprints, selections and anthologies than in new thought. A few missionaries from the West began to penetrate into China towards the end of the Ming Period.

The Ch'ing or Manchu Dynasty drove out the Mings in 1644, and lasted down to the present century.

The celebrated K'ang Hsi reigned from 1662 to 1723, and in his time the Jesuit missionaries were welcomed. A great revival of art in every form has made his reign proverbial throughout the world.

The well-meaning, but sickly Kuang-Hsü, and the iron-willed Empress-Dowager with whom he was always at loggerheads, were succeeded in 1911 by an attempt at republican government which has not yet taken coherent shape.

## DRAGONS

Anyone sufficiently interested in dragons to pursue the subject further should read Dr. M. W. de Visser's *The Dragon in China and Japan* (Amsterdam, Johannes Müller, 1913).

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